

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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## THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

PART THE SECOND. HARTWRIGHT'S NARRATIVE.

V.

THE story of my first inquiries in Hampshire is soon told.

My early departure from London enabled me to reach Mr. Dawson's house in the forenoon. Our interview, so far as the object of my visit was concerned, led to no satisfactory result. Mr. Dawson's books certainly showed when he had resumed his attendance on Miss Halcombe, at Blackwater Park; but it was not possible to calculate back from this date with any exactness, without such help from Mrs. Michelson as I knew she was unable to afford. She could not say from memory (who, in similar cases, ever can?) how many days had elapsed between the renewal of the doctor's attendance on his patient and the previous departure of Lady Glyde. She was almost certain of having mentioned the circumstance of the departure to Miss Halcombe, on the day after it happened—but then she was no more able to fix the date of the day on which this disclosure took place, than to fix the date of the day before, when Lady Glyde had left for London. Neither could she calculate, with any nearer approach to exactness, the time that had passed from the departure of her mistress, to the period when the undated letter from Madame Fosco arrived. Lastly, as if to complete the series of difficulties, the doctor himself, having been ill at the time, had omitted to make his usual entry of the day of the week and month when the gardener from Blackwater Park has called on him to deliver Mrs. Michelson's message.

Hopeless of obtaining assistance from Mr. Dawson, I resolved to try next if I could establish the date of Sir Percival's arrival at Knowlesbury. It seemed like a fatality! When I reached Knowlesbury the inn was shut up; and bills were posted on the walls. The speculation had been a bad one, as I was informed, ever since the time of the railway. The new hotel at the station had gradually absorbed the business; and the old inn (which we knew to be the inn at which Sir Percival had put up), had been closed about two months since. The proprietor had left the town with all his goods and chattels, and where he had gone I could not positively ascertain from any one. The four people of whom I inquired gave me four

different accounts of his plans and projects when he left Knowlesbury.

There were still some hours to spare before the last train left for London; and I drove back again, in a fly from the Knowlesbury station, to Blackwater Park, with the purpose of questioning the gardener and the person who kept the lodge. If they, too, proved unable to assist me, my resources, for the present, were at an end, and I might return to town.

I dismissed the fly a mile distant from the park; and, getting my directions from the driver, proceeded by myself to the house. As I turned into the lane from the high road, I saw a man, with a carpet-bag, walking before me rapidly on the way to the lodge. He was a little man, dressed in shabby black, and wearing a remarkably large hat. I set him down (as well as it was possible to judge) for a lawyer's clerk; and stopped at once to widen the distance between us. He had not heard me; and he walked on out of sight, without looking back. When I passed through the gates myself, a little while afterwards, he was not visible—he had evidently gone on to the house.

There were two women in the lodge. One of them was old; the other, I knew at once, by Marian's description of her, to be Margaret Porcher. I asked first if Sir Percival was at the park; and, receiving a reply in the negative, inquired next when he had left it. Neither of the women could tell me more than that he had gone away in the summer. I could extract nothing from Margaret Porcher but vacant smiles and shakings of the head. The old woman was a little more intelligent; and I managed to lead her into speaking of the manner of Sir Percival's departure, and of the alarm that it caused her. She remembered her master calling her out of bed, and remembered his frightening her by swearing—but the date at which the occurrence happened was, as she honestly acknowledged, "quite beyond her."

On leaving the lodge, I saw the gardener at work not far off. When I first addressed him, he looked at me rather distrustfully; but, on my using Mrs. Michelson's name, with a civil reference to himself, he entered into conversation readily enough. There is no need to describe what passed between us: it ended, as all my other attempts to discover the date had ended. The gardener knew that his master had driven away, at night "some time in July, the last

fortnight or the last ten days in the month"—and knew no more.

While we were speaking together, I saw the man in black, with the large hat, come out from the house, and stand at some little distance observing us.

Certain suspicions of his errand at Blackwater Park had already crossed my mind. They were now increased by the gardener's inability (or unwillingness) to tell me who the man was; and I determined to clear the way before me, if possible, by speaking to him. The plainest question I could put, as a stranger, would be to inquire if the house was allowed to be shown to visitors. I walked up to the man at once, and accosted him in those words.

His look and manner unmistakably betrayed that he knew who I was, and that he wanted to irritate me into quarrelling with him. His reply was insolent enough to have answered the purpose, if I had been less determined to control myself. As it was, I met him with the most resolute politeness; apologised for my involuntary intrusion (which he called a "trespass"), and left the grounds. It was exactly as I suspected. The recognition of me, when I left Mr. Kyle's office, had been evidently communicated to Sir Percival Glyde; and the man in black had been sent to the park, in anticipation of my making inquiries at the house, or in the neighbourhood. If I had given him the least chance of lodging any sort of legal complaint against me, the interference of the local magistrate would no doubt have been turned to account, as a clog on my proceedings, and a means of separating me from Marian and Laura for some days at least.

I was prepared to be watched on the way from Blackwater Park to the station, exactly as I had been watched, in London, the day before. But I could not discover at the time, and I have never found out since, whether I was really followed on this occasion or not. The man in black might have had means of tracking me at his disposal of which I was not aware—but I certainly saw nothing of him, in his own person, either on the way to the station, or afterwards on my arrival at the London terminus, in the evening. I reached home, on foot; taking the precaution, before I approached our own door, of walking round by the loneliest street in the neighbourhood, and there stopping and looking back more than once over the open space behind me. I had first learnt to use this stratagem against suspected treachery in the wilds of Central America—and now I was practising it again, with the same purpose and with even greater caution, in the heart of civilised London!

Nothing had happened to alarm Marian during my absence. She asked eagerly what success I had met with. When I told her, she could not conceal her surprise at the indifference with which I spoke of the failure of my investigations, thus far.

The truth was, that the ill-success of my inquiries had in no sense daunted me. I had pursued them as a matter of duty, and I had expected nothing from them. In the state of my

mind, at that time, it was almost a relief to me to know that the struggle was now narrowed to a trial of strength between myself and Sir Percival Glyde. The vindictive motive had mingled itself, all along, with my other and better motives; and I confess it was a satisfaction to me to feel that the surest way—the only way left—of serving Laura's cause, was to fasten my hold firmly on the villain who had married her. I acknowledge that I was not strong enough to keep my motives above the reach of this instinct of revenge. But I can honestly say that no base speculation on the future relations of Laura and myself, and on the private and personal concessions which I might force from Sir Percival if I once had him at my mercy, ever entered my mind. I never said to myself, "If I do succeed, it shall be one result of my success that I put it out of her husband's power to take her from me again." I could not look at her and think of the future with such thoughts as those. The sad sight of the change in her from her former self, made the one interest of my love an interest of tenderness and compassion, which her father or her brother might have felt, and which I felt, God knows, in my inmost heart. All my hopes looked no farther on, now, than to the day of her recovery. There, till she was strong again and happy again—there, till she could look at me as she had once looked, and speak to me as she had once spoken—the future of my happiest thoughts and my dearest wishes ended.

These words are written under no prompting of idle self-contemplation. Passages in this narrative are soon to come, which will set the minds of others in judgment on my conduct. It is right that the best and the worst of me should be fairly balanced, before that time.

On the morning after my return from Hampshire, I took Marian up-stairs into my working-room; and there laid before her the plan that I had matured, thus far, for mastering the one assailable point in the life of Sir Percival Glyde.

The way to the Secret lay through the mystery, hitherto impenetrable to all of us, of the woman in white. The approach to that, in its turn, might be gained by obtaining the assistance of Anne Catherick's mother; and the only ascertainable means of prevailing on Mrs. Catherick to act or to speak in the matter, depended on the chance of my discovering local particulars and family particulars, first of all, from Mrs. Clements. I had thought the subject over carefully; and I felt certain that the new inquiries could only begin, to any purpose, by my placing myself in communication with the faithful friend and protectress of Anne Catherick.

The first difficulty, then, was to find Mrs. Clements.

I was indebted to Marian's quick perception for meeting this necessity at once by the best and simplest means. She proposed to write to the farm near Limmeridge (Todd's Corner), to inquire whether Mrs. Clements had communicated with Mrs. Todd during the past

few months. How Mrs. Clements had been separated from Anne, it was impossible for us to say; but that separation once effected, it would certainly occur to Mrs. Clements to inquire after the missing woman in the neighbourhood of all others to which she was known to be most attached—the neighbourhood of Limmeridge. I saw directly that Marian's proposal offered as a prospect of success; and she wrote to Mrs. Todd accordingly by that day's post.

While we were waiting for the reply, I made myself master of all the information Marian could afford on the subject of Sir Percival's family, and of his early life. She could only speak on these topics from hearsay; but she was reasonably certain of the truth of what little she had to tell.

Sir Percival was an only child. His father, Sir Felix Glyde, had suffered, from his birth, under a painful and incurable deformity, and had shunned all society from his earliest years. His sole happiness was in the enjoyment of music; and he had married a lady with tastes similar to his own, who was said to be a most accomplished musician. He inherited the Blackwater property while still a young man. Neither he nor his wife, after taking possession, made advances of any sort towards the society of the neighbourhood; and no one endeavoured to tempt them into abandoning their reserve, with the one disastrous exception of the rector of the parish.

The rector was the worst of all innocent mischief-makers—an over-zealous man. He had heard that Sir Felix had left College with the character of being little better than a revolutionist in politics and an infidel in religion; and he arrived conscientiously at the conclusion that it was his bounden duty to summon the lord of the manor to hear sound views enunciated in the parish church. Sir Felix fiercely resented the clergyman's well-meant but ill-directed interference; insulting him so grossly and so publicly, that the families in the neighbourhood sent letters of indignant remonstrance to the park; and even the tenants on the Blackwater property expressed their opinion as strongly as they dared. The baronet, who had no country tastes of any kind, and no attachment to the estate, or to any one living on it, declared that society at Blackwater should never have a second chance of annoying him; and left the place from that moment. After a short residence in London, he and his wife departed for the Continent; and never returned to England again. They lived part of the time in France, and part in Germany—always keeping themselves in the strict retirement which the morbid sense of his own personal deformity had made a necessity to Sir Felix. Their son, Percival, had been born abroad, and had been educated there by private tutors. His mother was the first of his parents whom he lost. His father had died a few years after her, either in 1825 or 1826. Sir Percival had been in England, as a young man, once or twice before that period; but his acquaintance with the late Mr. Fairlie did not begin till after

the time of his father's death. They soon became very intimate, although Sir Percival was seldom, or never, at Limmeridge House in those days. Mr. Frederick Fairlie might have met him once or twice in Mr. Philip Fairlie's company; but he could have known little of him at that or at any other time. Sir Percival's only intimate friend in the Fairlie family had been Laura's father.

These were all the particulars that I could gain from Marian. They suggested nothing which was useful to my present purpose, but I noted them down carefully, in the event of their proving to be of importance at any future period.

Mrs. Todd's reply (addressed, by our own wish, to a post-office at some distance from us) had arrived at its destination when I went to apply for it. The chances, which had been all against us, hitherto, turned, from this moment, in our favour. Mrs. Todd's letter contained the first item of information of which we were in search.

Mrs. Clements, it appeared, had (as we had conjectured) written to Todd's Corner; asking pardon, in the first place, for the abrupt manner in which she and Anne had left their friends at the farm-house (on the morning after I had met the woman in white in Limmeridge churchyard); and then informing Mrs. Todd of Anne's disappearance, and entreating that she would cause inquiries to be made in the neighbourhood, on the chance that the lost woman might have strayed back to Limmeridge. In making this request, Mrs. Clements had been careful to add to it the address at which she might always be heard of; and that address Mrs. Todd now transmitted to Marian. It was in London; and within half an hour's walk of our own lodging.

In the words of the proverb, I was resolved not to let the grass grow under my feet. The next morning, I set forth to seek an interview with Mrs. Clements. This was my first step forward in the investigation. The story of the desperate attempt to which I now stood committed, begins here.

#### VI.

THE address communicated by Mrs. Todd took me to a lodging-house situated in a respectable street near the Gray's Inn-road.

When I knocked, the door was opened by Mrs. Clements herself. She did not appear to remember me; and asked what my business was. I recalled to her our meeting in Limmeridge churchyard, at the close of my interview there with the woman in white; taking special care to remind her that I was the person who assisted Anne Catherick (as Anne had herself declared) to escape the pursuit from the Asylum. This was my only claim to the confidence of Mrs. Clements. She remembered the circumstance the moment I spoke of it; and asked me into the parlour, in the greatest anxiety to know if I had brought her any news of Anne.

It was impossible for me to tell her the whole truth, without, at the same time, entering into particulars on the subject of the conspiracy, which it would have been dangerous to



confide to a stranger. I could only abstain most carefully from raising any false hopes, and then explain that the object of my visit was to discover the persons who were really responsible for Anne's disappearance. I even added, so as to exonerate myself from any after-reproach of my own conscience, that I entertained not the least hope of being able to trace her; that I believed we should never see her alive again; and that my main interest in the affair was to bring to punishment two men whom I suspected to be concerned in luring her away, and at whose hands I and some dear friends of mine had suffered a grievous wrong. With this explanation, I left it to Mrs. Clements to say whether our interest in the matter (whatever difference there might be in the motives which actuated us) was not the same; and whether she felt any reluctance to forward my object by giving me such information on the subject of my inquiries as she happened to possess.

The poor woman was, at first, too much confused and agitated to understand thoroughly what I said to her. She could only reply that I was welcome to anything she could tell me in return for the kindness I had shown to Anne. But as she was not very quick and ready, at the best of times, in talking to strangers, she would beg me to put her in the right way, and to say where I wished her to begin. Knowing by experience that the plainest narrative attainable from persons who are not accustomed to arrange their ideas, is the narrative which goes far enough back at the beginning to avoid all impediments of retrospection in its course, I asked Mrs. Clements to tell me, first, what had happened after she had left Limeridge; and so, by watchful questioning, carried her on from point to point till we reached the period of Anne's disappearance.

The substance of the information which I thus obtained, was as follows:

On leaving the farm at Todd's Corner, Mrs. Clements and Anne had travelled, that day, as far as Derby; and had remained there a week, on Anne's account. They had then gone on to London, and had lived in the lodging occupied by Mrs. Clements, at that time, for a month or more, when circumstances connected with the house and the landlord had obliged them to change their quarters. Anne's terror of being discovered in London or its neighbourhood, whenever they ventured to walk out, had gradually communicated itself to Mrs. Clements; and she had determined on removing to one of the most out-of-the-way places in England, to the town of Grimsby in Lincolnshire, where her deceased husband had passed all his early life. His relatives were respectable people settled in the town; they had always treated Mrs. Clements with great kindness; and she thought it impossible to do better than go there, and take the advice of her husband's friends. Anne would not hear of returning to her mother at Wellingham, because she had been removed to the Asylum from that place, and because Sir Percival would be certain to go back there and find

her again. There was serious weight in this objection, and Mrs. Clements felt that it was not to be easily removed.

At Grimsby the first serious symptoms of illness had shown themselves in Anne. They appeared soon after the news of Lady Glyde's marriage had been made public in the newspapers, and had reached her through that medium.

The medical man who was sent for to attend the sick woman, discovered at once that she was suffering from a serious affection of the heart. The illness lasted long, left her very weak, and returned, at intervals, though with mitigated severity, again and again. They remained at Grimsby, in consequence, all through the first half of the new year; and there they might probably have stayed much longer, but for the sudden resolution which Anne took, at this time, to venture back to Hampshire, for the purpose of obtaining a private interview with Lady Glyde.

Mrs. Clements did all in her power to oppose the execution of this hazardous and unaccountable project. No explanation of her motives was offered by Anne, except that she believed the day of her death was not far off, and that she had something on her mind which must be communicated to Lady Glyde, at any risk, in secret. Her resolution to accomplish this purpose was so firmly settled, that she declared her intention of going to Hampshire by herself, if Mrs. Clements felt any unwillingness to go with her. The doctor, on being consulted, was of opinion that serious opposition to her wishes would, in all probability, produce another and perhaps a fatal fit of illness; and Mrs. Clements, under this advice, yielded to necessity, and once more, with sad forebodings of trouble and danger to come, allowed Anne Catherick to have her own way.

On the journey from London to Hampshire, Mrs. Clements discovered that one of their fellow-passengers was well acquainted with the neighbourhood of Blackwater, and could give her all the information she needed on the subject of localities. In this way, she found out that the only place they could go to which was not dangerously near to Sir Percival's residence, was a large village, called Sandon. The distance, here, from Blackwater Park was between three and four miles—and that distance, and back again, Anne had walked, on each occasion when she had appeared in the neighbourhood of the lake.

For the few days, during which they were at Sandon without being discovered, they had lived a little away from the village, in the cottage of a decent widow-woman, who had a bedroom to let, and whose discreet silence Mrs. Clements had done her best to secure, for the first week at least. She had also tried hard to induce Anne to be content with writing to Lady Glyde, in the first instance. But the failure of the warning contained in the anonymous letter sent to Limeridge had made Anne resolute to speak this time, and obstinate in the determination to go on her errand alone.

Mrs. Clements, nevertheless, followed her privately on each occasion when she went to



the lake—without, however, venturing near enough to the boat-house to be witness of what took place there. When Anne returned for the last time from the dangerous neighbourhood, the fatigue of walking, day after day, distances which were far too great for her strength, added to the exhausting effect of the agitation from which she had suffered, produced the result which Mrs. Clements had dreaded all along. The old pain over the heart and the other symptoms of the illness at Grimsby returned; and Anne was confined to her bed in the cottage.

In this emergency, the first necessity, as Mrs. Clements knew by experience, was to endeavour to quiet Anne's anxiety of mind; and, for this purpose, the good woman went herself the next day to the lake, to try if she could find Lady Glyde (who would be sure, as Anne said, to take her daily walk to the boat-house), and prevail on her to come back privately to the cottage near Sandon. On reaching the outskirts of the plantation, Mrs. Clements encountered, not Lady Glyde, but a tall, stout, elderly gentleman with a book in his hand—in other words, Count Fosco.

The Count, after looking at her very attentively for a moment, asked if she expected to see any one in that place; and added, before she could reply, that he was waiting there with a message from Lady Glyde, but that he was not quite certain whether the person then before him answered the description of the person with whom he was desired to communicate. Upon this, Mrs. Clements at once confided her errand to him, and entreated that he would help to allay Anne's anxiety by trusting his message to her. The Count most readily and kindly complied with her request. The message, he said, was a most important one. Lady Glyde entreated Anne and her good friend to return immediately to London, as she felt certain that Sir Percival would discover them, if they remained any longer in the neighbourhood of Blackwater. She was herself going to London in a short time; and if Mrs. Clements and Anne would go there first, and would let her know what their address was, they should hear from her and see her, in a fortnight or less. The Count added, that he had already attempted to give a friendly warning to Anne herself, but that she had been too much startled by seeing that he was a stranger, to let him approach and speak to her.

To this, Mrs. Clements replied, in the greatest alarm and distress, that she asked nothing better than to take Anne safely to London; but that there was no present hope of removing her from the dangerous neighbourhood, as she lay ill in her bed at that moment. The Count inquired if Mrs. Clements had sent for medical advice; and, hearing that she had hitherto hesitated to do so, from the fear of making their position publicly known in the village, informed her that he was himself a medical man, and that he would go back with her, if she pleased, and see what could be done for Anne. Mrs. Clements (feeling a natural confidence in the Count, as a person trusted with a secret message from Lady

Glyde) gratefully accepted the offer; and they went back together to the cottage.

Anne was asleep when they got there. The Count started at the sight of her (evidently from astonishment at her resemblance to Lady Glyde). Poor Mrs. Clements supposed that he was only shocked to see how ill she was. He would not allow her to be awakened; he was contented with putting questions to Mrs. Clements about her symptoms, with looking at her, and with lightly touching her pulse. Sandon was a large enough place to have a grocer's and druggist's shop in it; and thither the Count went, to write his prescription and to get the medicine made up. He brought it back himself; and told Mrs. Clements that the medicine was a powerful stimulant, and that it would certainly give Anne strength to get up and bear the fatigue of a journey to London of only a few hours. The remedy was to be administered at stated times, on that day, and on the day after. On the third day she would be well enough to travel; and he arranged to meet Mrs. Clements at the Blackwater station, and to see them off by the mid-day train. If they did not appear, he would assume that Anne was worse, and would proceed at once to the cottage.

As events turned out, however, no such emergency as this occurred. The medicine had an extraordinary effect on Anne, and the good results of it were helped by the assurance Mrs. Clements could now give her that she would soon see Lady Glyde in London. At the appointed day and time (when they had not been quite so long as a week in Hampshire, altogether), they arrived at the station. The Count was waiting there for them, and was talking to an elderly lady, who appeared to be going to travel by the train to London also. He most kindly assisted them, and put them into the carriage himself; begging Mrs. Clements not to forget to send her address to Lady Glyde. The elderly lady did not travel in the same compartment; and they did not notice what became of her on reaching the London terminus. Mrs. Clements secured respectable lodgings in a quiet neighbourhood; and then wrote, as she had engaged to do, to inform Lady Glyde of the address.

A little more than a fortnight passed, and no answer came.

At the end of that time, a lady (the same elderly lady whom they had seen at the station) called in a cab, and said that she came from Lady Glyde, who was then at an hotel in London, and who wished to see Mrs. Clements for the purpose of arranging a future interview with Anne. Mrs. Clements expressed her willingness (Anne being present at the time, and entreating her to do so) to forward the object in view, especially as she was not required to be away from the house for more than half an hour at the most. She and the elderly lady (clearly Madame Fosco) then left in the cab. The lady stopped the cab, after it had driven some distance, at a shop, before they got to the hotel; and begged Mrs. Clements to wait for her for a few minutes, while she made a pur-

chance that had been forgotten. She never appeared again.

After waiting some time, Mrs. Clements became alarmed, and ordered the cabman to drive back to her lodgings. When she got there, after an absence of rather more than half an hour, Anne was gone.

The only information to be obtained from the people of the house, was derived from the servant who waited on the lodgers. She had opened the door to a boy from the street, who had left a letter for "the young woman who lived on the second floor" (the part of the house which Mrs. Clements occupied). The servant had delivered the letter; had then gone down stairs; and, five minutes afterwards, had observed Anne open the front door, and go out, dressed in her bonnet and shawl. She had probably taken the letter with her; for it was not to be found, and it was therefore impossible to tell what inducement had been offered to make her leave the house. It must have been a strong one—for she would never stir out alone in London of her own accord. If Mrs. Clements had not known this by experience, nothing would have induced her to go away in the cab, even for so short a time as half an hour only.

As soon as she could collect her thoughts, the first idea that naturally occurred to Mrs. Clements, was to go and make inquiries at the Asylum, to which she dreaded that Anne had been taken back.

She went there the next day—having been informed of the locality in which the house was situated by Anne herself. The answer she received (her application having, in all probability, been made a day or two before the false Anne Catherick had really been consigned to safe keeping in the Asylum) was, that no such person had been brought back there. She had then written to Mrs. Catherick, at Welmingham, to know if she had seen or heard anything of her daughter; and had received an answer in the negative. After that reply had reached her, she was at the end of her resources, and perfectly ignorant where else to inquire, or what else to do. From that time to this, she had remained in total ignorance of the cause of Anne's disappearance, and of the end of Anne's story.

#### OUR EYE-WITNESS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

PROCEEDING with that examination of the leading ornamental characteristics of our metropolis which has included its statues, its public buildings, and some of its private houses and shops, we come to a consideration of a certain collection of pictures lodged in one of the public buildings which has been already described (not favourably), and which collection must be looked upon as one of the public decorative features of London.

The British public is long-suffering and patient. It takes, for the most part, what is given to it, and bears what is inflicted on it, with a

gentle acquiescence. So long as it is allowed to yawn occasionally, and to change frequently its supporting leg from the right to the left and back again, it will submit to almost any amount of boring that its tormentors think proper to inflict. The public is, in the mass, reverential, and has an implicit confidence—Heaven help it!—in professors. When Professor Conkey tells it that it must go through a collection of ten thousand cases full of shells; when Professor Pradam commands its attention to a similar number of fossils; when Professor Fluffy commands it to contemplate a million or two of moths, every grain of whose down becomes at last a weight of tons upon the spectators' spirits, the public "supposes it is all right," and does as it is bid.

But, O much-enduring and sweet-tempered public! you are none the less taken in and cruelly dealt with. Professor Fudge, known as the Eye-witness, is determined to turn king's evidence upon all other professors, and to implore you to throw their yoke off, to think for yourselves, and to become emancipated once and for ever from a blind allegiance to "collections."

It is pitiful to see how, when a solemn professor—suppose we call him Waghorn—when a solemn Professor Waghorn tells the public he is going to enunciate an opinion, the public "waits for the Waghorn," and believes implicitly. What your Eye-witness has to propose, by way of remedy, is a simple and easily organised arrangement. He proposes that in all collections of scientific and artistic treasures, there shall be two departments: one for the public, containing the things which it gives that public pleasure to see; one for the professors, consisting of all the boring things which it gives the public pain to see; and that for these last, THE PROFESSORS THEMSELVES SHALL PAY.

Now, this question concerning the national collection of pictures in Trafalgar-square being one of considerable importance, your Eye-witness desires to give in his report, rather in the form of legal evidence, than in any less exact manner. He will suppose himself, with the reader's permission, in a witness-box before a Jury, consisting of the whole of his fellow-countrymen; Professor Waghorn, and the ghost of Sir George Beaumont on the bench. The evidence given by the Eye-witness—who mounts the witness-box with a catalogue of the national collection in his hand, and who presents rather a worn appearance (in consequence, probably, of his recent endurance)—is to this effect:

His name is Fudge—David Fudge. His residence is at No. 2, Lumbago-terrace. Has had a long and careful Art-education, and has been engaged, during a great period of his life, in Art-studies. Considers himself, therefore, qualified to give an opinion on matters connected with the Fine Arts. Has been to the National Gallery. Has been recently—yesterday in fact. Thinks there are some very noble pictures in that collection. Thinks, also, that there is a great deal of rubbish. (Shudder through the frame of the

ghost of Sir George Beaumont.) Thinks the public money has in some cases been judiciously spent in the purchase of pictures. In other cases, thinks it has been wasted in a most monstrous manner. Is of opinion that the only thing that justifies the disbursement of the public money in pictures, is intrinsic merit in those pictures. Is also of opinion that the purchase at immense expense of works of art, which are not good specimens of the masters they represent, and which are bought simply because they are by those masters, is a mistaken proceeding. Supposing such a thing possible, as that some National Library could only secure a copy of *Castle Dangerous* with which to represent SIR WALTER SCOTT, or of *Titus Andronicus* as a specimen of SHAKESPEARE—thinks they would do better to have no specimen of those masters. If Professor Waghorn thinks that is not evidence, and would be glad to know what the witness means, will give as an instance the purchase of a picture called *The Adoration of the Magi*, said to be by PAUL VERONESE, which is not a good picture, and by no means worth the money expended on it.

The ghost of Sir George Beaumont wishes to know whether Professor Fudge is aiming a blow at the reputation of Paolo Veronese?

Mr. Fudge (resuming his evidence) is of opinion that Paolo Veronese is one of the greatest painters that ever lived, but that the picture alluded to is either a bad one, or a spurious one, and that the authorities who purchased it would have done better to wait; as, indeed, the event has proved, a very fine specimen of this master, *The Family of Darius*, having since come into the possession of the nation.

Professor Waghorn would like to inquire if there is anything else in which Mr. Smudge would like to impugn the judgment of persons who—or they would not be employed by Government—are infallible.

The witness (remarking in passing that his name is not Smudge but Fudge) deposes that there are a great many more things in which he is at issue with those infallible persons spoken of by Professor Waghorn. Witness finds, on reference to the catalogue which he holds in his hand, that there are in the national collection eleven works by RUBENS, seven of which were purchased with the public money. That of those seven pictures, three only are good for anything: that is to say, the *Rape of the Sabines*, lucidly described in the catalogue as “a tumultuous group of men and women in violent struggle,” the landscape called *Rubens’s Château*, and the *Judgment of Paris*. The rest, which are poor affairs (shiver from Sir George Beaumont), can only be excused as purchases, if they were inevitable parts of a “lot” which the country wanted.

Professor Waghorn wishes witness to explain himself.

Mr. Fudge will have the greatest pleasure in doing so. What he means may be best shown by an instance. Witness has been present this morning at an auction of general property, at

which a nice pair of washing-tubs were put up for sale; witness wished to purchase the washing-tubs for domestic purposes, but found that they were inseparably mixed up with a cockatoo’s cage, seven flat-irons, and two carpet-brooms, which he did not require. He accepted, however, these supererogatory appendages because he wanted the tubs, and he supposes, in his fairness, that government may have been obliged to do the like with regard to some of the national pictures. Witness would think that the pictures called respectively, *The Triumph of Julius Caesar*, *The Horrors of War*, and *The Apotheosis of William the Taciturn*, must have come into the possession of this unfortunate country under some such circumstances.

Professor Waghorn has a distinct recollection of the two first of these magnificent works, but would be obliged if the witness could refresh his memory with regard to the last.

The *Apotheosis of William the Taciturn*, the witness continues, is a picture representing a gentleman going up to Heaven in a cuirass and jack-boots, assisted by numerous angels, who look heavy enough to require some aid themselves in getting off the ground, and one of whom has a helmet on. A disagreeable-looking man, who probably found the Silent William a congenial companion, is trying to hold him down to earth, while a strange, and hitherto unknown animal, compounded of a lioness, a mastiff, and a bull-calf, is kicking up his heels below in evident joy at William’s removal from a sphere where he contributed so little to the general satisfaction of society.

Sir George Beaumont begs to inquire whether Mr. Fudge is aware that, in objecting to certain purchases of pictures by PETER PAUL RUBENS, he has uttered an implied censure on the judgment of those persons who bought the glorious picture called “*The Brazen Serpent*”?

Mr. Fudge is perfectly aware that he has implied such a censure. He thinks that that picture does not justify the outlay of the Public Money by the Trustees of the National Gallery, at a time when they were possessed of such good specimens of the master as are to be found in the *Rape of the Sabines*, and the magnificent landscape of Rubens’s *Château*, presented by one of the gentlemen he sees before him on that bench. Sir George Beaumont rises, and bows, and remarks that he is glad Mr. Fudge can appreciate that work at any rate. After which the witness goes on to say that the warning afforded by the collection at the Louvre, in Paris, should make any nation careful how they overwhelmed themselves with pictures by the distinguished artist whose works were under discussion.

Dr. Waghorn inquires whether witness has anything else to object to?

Mr. Fudge replies that he has a great deal; that he has only, in fact, just begun objecting. He objects to a couple of pictures by Guido, one, of Susannah assaulted by two mahogany Elders; the other, of a mahogany Lot and two Daughters. He also objects to a vile Magdalen by



the same artist. He considers it a wanton waste of the national money to have spent it in those works; especially when the country is already in possession of the picture of Perseus and Andromeda, presented by William IV.

Professor Waghorn inquiring if Mr. Fudge has done insulting the memory of Guido? the Eye-witness replies that he has done for the present, as he finds that the other works by this master in the gallery, including a daub called the *Ecce Homo*, another daub, entitled *The Coronation of the Virgin*, and a third of a depressing nature, representing St. Jerome usefully employed in hammering his breast with a stone, came into the possession of the country by gift or bequest.

Sir George Beaumont is understood at this juncture to murmur a request that he may be removed and decent interment accorded to him. (Evidence resumed.)

Mr. Fudge finds, on reference to the catalogue, that two pictures under the name of Titian, numbered 224 and 635, were purchased, the first in the year 1852, the second in this present 1860. He considers that neither of these works was wanted, and that a collection in which the splendid picture of Bacchus and Ariadne is to be found, does not stand in need of such an addition as the very indifferent performance now placed next to it. Such purchases as these were again an inexcusable waste of the public money.

Dr. Waghorn remarks, that perhaps Mr. Fudge objects to the portrait of Ariosto, by the master some of whose works he has presumed to disparage?

The Eye-witness replies, that he considers the portrait of Ariosto by TITIAN, which has just been added to the collection, to be one of the most remarkable and interesting pictures in the National Gallery. The acquiring of such a work might possibly justify the purchase of those pictures, which were inevitable parts of the same "lot." If this excuse were offered, witness would allow it, but it would not justify the authorities in keeping such unwelcome parts of their bargain. If any pictures were obliged to be purchased under such circumstances, the unwelcome parts of the "lot" should be resold, or, if nobody could be found to buy them, should be put away, and hidden from human eyes.

A Juryman—Why?

Witness—Because the presence of bad pictures among good, impairs very seriously the aspect of the whole collection, and by adding to the number of objects which solicit the eye, fatigues the visitor to the gallery, and confuses him in an unnecessary degree.

Professor Waghorn at this point interposed, and said that he thought the manner of arranging his evidence which Professor Fudge had adopted, was likely to lead to confusion, and that it would be better if he took a chronological view of the different art purchases made by the committee, and examined the additions to

the national collection which had been effected each succeeding year.

The Eye-witness had no objection to such an arrangement. There was no occasion to revert to some of the earlier purchases which had been already alluded to. The ANGERSTEIN Gallery formed the nucleus of the collection; it was unnecessary to criticise it. In the year 1825, succeeding that of the opening of the National Gallery at Mr. Angerstein's house, a bad CORREGGIO of a Holy Family was added to the collection. It is separated from other similar subjects in the catalogue description by the distinction of a "toilet basket" in the foreground, but as the only discernible contents of the said basket are some enormous gardening shears, there seems reason to doubt the propriety of this description, as there certainly is the judiciousness of the purchase. A picture by ANNIBALE CARACCI, a magnificent TITIAN, of Bacchus and Ariadne, and a group of Bacchanalian Miscreants dancing, a good specimen of NICOLÒ POUSSIN, came into the possession of the country; and in 1834 another CORREGGIO, Mercury instructing Cupid in the presence of Venus, and yet another and an especially bad one called the *Ecce Homo*. In 1837, a Holy Family by MURILLO, the Brazen Serpent (a purchase alluded to above, as of doubtful wisdom), and a SALVATOR ROSA, were bought by the Trustees; and in 1839, the St. Catherine of RAPHAEL. The country (supposing it wanted one) was already in possession of a Holy Family by MAZZOLINI, bequeathed by the REV. W. H. CARR. There is a certain amount of deception about this picture; for, in another Holy Family by GAROFALO, a very evil saint who is kneeling in the foreground of each of these gems, and whose villanous face is too terrible to be mistaken, is in one case called St. Nicholas, and in the other St. Francis.

Sir George Beaumont at this point in the evidence remarked, that there must be some mistake here, and he wishes he could consult the deceased CARR upon the subject. Was it possible he could do so? Did there happen to be a Medium among the Jury?

The Eye-witness replied that if there were, he should challenge that jurymen, and demand his withdrawal. After a discussion of some warmth, and after Professor Waghorn had with some difficulty succeeded in restoring order, the evidence was again resumed.

Mr. Fudge then details purchases made since 1840; but when he comes to the Temptation of St. Anthony, by CARACCI, and explains that the "temptations" held out to the saint in this picture are—a demon with four fingers and no thumb, a lion with horns, a dragon, upside down, making a face, and a Fury, holding a serpent by the tip of its tail—Sir George Beaumont wishes to know whether Mr. Fudge is aiming—

Yes, Mr. Fudge again interrupts, he is aiming at saying most decidedly that there are too many Caraccis in the National Gallery; and that the purchase of this new one, though only

as big as a soup-plate, is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Even supposing that this small picture was acquired at a trifling expense, which witness has his suspicions was not the case, an accumulation of trifling expenses makes a large sum, and if this picture cost only a four-penny-piece (which would be threepence-halfpenny too much), that fourpenny was a public fourpenny, and the Committee, or by whatever name the Public Enemy was called, had no right to waste it.

Sir George Beaumont is understood to mutter that the Caraccis occupied a high place in the schools; and

Professor Waghorn requests that the evidence may be continued, and that Mr. Fudge will inform the Jury what may be his opinion of the purchases since the year '53 inclusive, down to which period the evidence has now been brought.

Professor Fudge, in turn, wishes to make a preliminary inquiry before answering the learned doctor's question. He wishes to know for whom the National Gallery is intended: whether for the English public generally, or for connoisseurs like the learned doctor, and enlightened Ghosts like his colleague on the bench?

Dr. Waghorn, after a prolonged consultation with Sir George Beaumont, replies, that he thinks that question is not evidence, and declines to answer it, as irregular.

Professor Fudge then begs to know whether it is also irregular for him to ask whether the pictures in the National Gallery are purchased with the public money, or with that of the connoisseurs and ghosts?

Dr. Waghorn replies, that this question is also irregular, and Sir George Beaumont is heard to add that it is even "highly" irregular.

The only conclusion Professor Fudge can come to is, that a National Gallery is intended for the delight of the nation, and is paid for with the nation's money. Under these assumed circumstances, he is of opinion that no person can glance down the list of the purchases made since the year 1852, and not be much struck by two things—their great number, and the unknown character, for the most part, of the names of those masters to whom they are attributed. He himself having had, as he must beg to remind the Jury, a careful Art-education, had, in looking through the catalogue of the National Gallery, found the names of above fifty masters of whom he had never heard. He concluded that they were eminent, from finding their names in that catalogue. How was it he (witness) had never heard of them?

Professor Waghorn begs to remind Mr. Fudge that if these masters are unknown in this country, that is the very reason why their works should be secured in order that they might remain unknown no longer. (A feeble chuckle from the ghost of Sir George Beaumont.)

Witness is ready to agree to this remark, on condition that he is able to prove that the works of these masters are worthy of being known. Is the reputation of the great PAC-

CHIAROTTO worthy of promulgation? Is that of NICCOLO ALUNNO, of LUDGER ZUM RING? In one word—for it is impossible to give all the names of these unknown masters—what is the meaning of these very numerous purchases of pictures which are not by men of great renown, and which are not of themselves intrinsically excellent; and of the collecting in such vast numbers of works of the pre-Raphaelite period? The National Gallery is half full of them. They have oozed out of the rooms especially assigned to them, and meet one at every turn in all parts of the Gallery, on the staircases, the passages, the hall. Those pictures cannot, in most instances, be regarded in any other light than as curiosities; many—nay, most of them—are scarcely works of Art at all. (Sir George Beaumont is understood to murmur that they are certainly wanting in "tone.") Now, is the National Gallery a place for curiosities or for works of Art?

Dr. Waghorn is of opinion that it is desirable that there should be some means of tracing the Chronological History of Art, and that it is therefore necessary that the earlier schools of painting should be represented in a national collection, as well as those in which the art of painting is developed in its more mature and cultivated phases.

Professor Fudge is ready to grant that postulate, but he wishes to know whether this may not be done on a less exorbitant scale; whether, in short, considering the extraordinary likeness of one of these pictures to another, two or three of them would not be enough? The fifteenth century, from about the year 1410 to 1490, is represented by the works of thirty-four painters; of these—all bought within the last six years—only about a dozen names are known to fame. It cannot be said in justification of the purchase of these pictures, that they are all wanted chronologically, as links in the collection, seeing that many of them are of precisely the same date.

Doctor Waghorn is of opinion that it is desirable, in a great collection, to represent each artist of each period, whether known or otherwise.

Witness would beg to inquire what then will be the course adopted by the Art Committees of future ages with regard to the thousands of modern painters?

Doctor Waghorn begs to state that he can have nothing to say on a subject so futile, vain, and frivolous as Modern Art.

At this point in the proceedings a messenger comes into court, and whispering a few words to the Eye-witness, delivers to him a sealed paper and withdraws. It is nothing less than an authentic Report of the different moneys expended in pictures for the national collection, from the commencement of the year 1844 down to the present time, together with the names of the persons from whom those pictures were purchased, and other particulars calculated to explain much that was otherwise lost in obscurity.

Dr. Waghorn wishes to know how witness became possessed of the paper in question?

Witness declines to reply to that inquiry. He has simply to state that the document gives an account of the prices of some of those pictures which have already been alluded to, with other information of a startling and bewildering nature. Witness finds that a certain pair of GUIDOS mentioned in a former part of his evidence in no complimentary terms, viz. Susannah and the Elders, and Lot and his Daughters, were purchased, the first for 1260*l.*! and the second for 1680*l.*! from a certain MR. PERRICE, whom witness begs to congratulate on his excellent bargain. It is also revealed by this paper that a head of a Jewish Rabbi by REMBRANDT, was bought for 473*l.* 11*s.*; and a portrait of a man for 630*l.*—a rather long price for a cleverly-executed portrait of an unknown gentleman by an unknown painter. The VELASQUEZ Boar-hunt was purchased at 2200*l.*, and the small representation of the Vision of a Knight by RAPHAEL, was secured at the high price of 1050*l.* A more serious waste of money than even that recorded in the case of the two GUIDO pictures succeeds these purchases; the sum of 787*l.* 10*s.* having been handed over to LORD DARTMOUTH for the miserable little picture of the Temptation of St. Anthony by CARACCI, a picture nineteen and a half inches high by thirteen and a half inches wide, and which, it now appears, had not even the merit of cheapness to recommend it. In 1851, a portrait of REMBRANDT by himself was bought for 430*l.* 10*s.*, and a portrait of a man by VAN EYCK for 365*l.*, an unnecessary purchase, as we already possessed an excellent specimen of the artist. The portrait of Rembrandt was a justifiable acquirement, simply from the fact that a likeness of that master was an interesting addition to the national collection. Then comes the SOULT picture, TITIAN's Tribute Money. There may have been sufficient public curiosity about this picture at the time (though witness doubts it) to have justified the laying out of 2604*l.* on its purchase. The Franciscan Monk by ZURBARAN, bought of Louis Philippe for 265*l.*, was not dear at the price: though an uninteresting work enough, and looking at first sight more like a sack of potatoes propped up in a corner than anything else. The Adoration of the Shepherds by VELASQUEZ, and the Warrior adoring the Infant Christ, by a disciple of the BELLINI school, were both well purchased: though the first cost 2050*l.*, and the second 525*l.*

Professor Waghorn remarks, that on the whole, then, witness is satisfied with the greater number of the purchases made from the year 1844 to the year 1853, inclusive?

Witness replies that, with the exception of the Jewish Rabbi, the two GUIDOS (Lot and his Daughter and Susannah), the Temptation of St. Anthony, by CARACCI, the portrait by VAN EYCK, and that by the unknown artist, purchases which together amount to a sum of 5496*l.* 1*s.*—with these exceptions, he is satisfied. But he wishes to point out to the Jury how small sums mount up, and what a large sum might have been saved by the rejection of the

pictures he has named. He also wishes to ask Dr. Waghorn whether he does not think that that sum of 5496*l.* 1*s.* would not have been so large as to have offered an irresistible temptation to the possessors of really fine works by the old masters on the Continent to part with some one unmistakably good picture which should have been an ornament to our National Gallery?

Dr. Waghorn replies, that the possessors of such works are extremely reluctant to part with them.

The Eye-witness begs to inquire whether the attempt has been made with such energy and address as are thrown into private mercantile transactions, and whether such sums as he has just named have been offered?

The learned Professor is not in a position to answer that question, but will probably do so on an early day, next century.

Mr. Fudge, in resuming his evidence, refers to the appearance on the walls of the National Gallery of some of the most unpopular pictures that have ever hung there—pictures which, if purchased at all, should have been consigned to a museum rather than a national gallery; but which would have been still better housed in the apartments (if he had any) of their original proprietor, the great HEER KRÜGER, of Minden. The Eye-witness wishes to know what the ghost of Sir George Beaumont, Dr. Waghorn, and the Jury think is likely to be the nature of a collection which, numbering no fewer than sixty-four pictures, is to be had for the sum of 2800*l.*! or at the rate of not quite 44*l.* per picture? Was that a promising purchase? Were pictures sold at 44*l.* apiece likely to turn out fit works to hang in the national collection of the richest country in the world? Truly, this was a cheap lot; but cheap as it was, it turned out not to be worth even the small sum that was given for it. The authorities who bought this lot, seized (as well they might be) with remorse, determined to sell above half of (we will suppose) the worst of them, and thirty-seven of the sixty-four were thrown once more into the market. This mass of more than half the purchase fetched only 249*l.* 8*s.*, or at the rate of *not quite 7*l.* per picture.* (Sensation.) The pictures out of this "lot" which remain are to be seen by any persons who choose to walk into the National Gallery. They were "purchased by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of the public." MR. GLADSTONE, who was in office on that occasion, doubtless acted on the advice of some friend with a taste for German art.

Professor Waghorn requests at this juncture that he may not be called upon to listen to any disparaging remarks on the German School of Art; the purest, the severest that ever existed; a school probably beyond the comprehension of the witness, as it never stooped to solicit by any adaptandum means the popularity of the masses, while, for the connoisseur and the initiated critic, it possessed attractions that were held out by no other school of any period whatsoever.



Witness smiles, and begs next to call the attention of the Jury to a "lot" of pictures purchased from one *DE BAMMEVILLE*. They were five in number, and collectively cost 1088*l.* 16*s.* Out of this collection a head by *ALBERT DÜRER*, price 147*l.*, alone was a desirable purchase, and that chiefly because of the name attached to it. The other pictures are by *PACCHIAROTTO*—spoken of above—by *NICOLÒ ALUNNI*, by *SAN SEVERINO*, and *PHILIPPINO LIPPI*. There is nothing important enough in this collection to justify its purchase.

In 1855, two pictures by *BOTTICELLI*, each labelled "Madonna and Child with Angels," were bought, and from different proprietors. One of these might certainly have been omitted. So might the *St. Jerome* of *COSIMO ROSSELLI*, the *Madonna and Child* of *VIVARINI*, the *St. Jerome Reading* of *MARCO BASAITI*, and *Portrait* by *PORDENONE*. Where is this last, by-the-by? It is not in the catalogue, nor in the list of pictures resold after their purchase. Perhaps it is in the cellars? Can Dr. Wagborn elucidate the difficulty?

Dr. Wagborn is not in a position to answer that question. It is irregular.

With regard to the other pictures of the year 1855, witness has already expressed his opinion of the *Adoration of the Magi* by *PAUL VERONESE*, and he is not reconciled to the purchase by finding it was effected for 1977*l.* He also thinks that the *Madonna and Child* of *MANTEGUA* was dear at 1125*l.* 12*s.*, and that the *Portrait* of a *Young Man* by *BARTOLOMEUS VENETUS*, was an unnecessary, though cheap, venture, at 48*l.* 10*s.* In the December of the year 1855, a "deal" appears to have been effected with a certain *BARON GALVAGNA*, by which transaction that nobleman became possessed of 2189*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.*, and our happy country of ten pictures, two of which, a *TINTORETTO* and a *JACOPO BASSAN*, it parted with again, for a consideration of 141*l.*; one of which, the *BELLINI*, it thinks very fine, two more of which, by *SIGNORI TACCONI*, and *DA' LIBRI*, it could willingly have dispensed with, and the remaining five of which it is unable to say anything about, for the simple reason that it cannot find them. They are not in the catalogue, they are not in the list of the resold. Perhaps they are being kept for us till we get wise enough to appreciate them, when we shall be allowed a peep, if we are good. The three principal portions of an *Altar-piece* by *PERUGINO*, for which 357*l.* 8*s.* 7*d.* was paid, in May, 1856, to *DUKE MELZI* of Milan, was not, even at that high price, unwisely secured; so fine a specimen is this triptych of the master. The *Good Samaritan* of *BASSANO*, bought in the same month, was a lawful purchase enough, and the *Two Apostles*, by *GIOTTO*, at 78*l.* 15*s.*, or at the rate of 39*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* per apostle, cannot be called dear. These purchases are succeeded, however, by others that cannot be censured too strongly. 1102*l.* 10*s.* for the *Triumph* of *Julius Cæsar*, by *RUBENS*, and 210*l.* for *The Horrors of War*, by the same master, both valueless specimens. The purchase of the *Glorification* of the *Madonna*, by

*LO SPAGNA*, for 651*l.*, puts a finishing touch to the mistakes of the year. The next which succeeds it, 1857, is characterised by the addition to our National Gallery of one of the finest pictures which it contains, the *Family of Darius*, by *PAUL VERONESE*; a work so fine, indeed, that even the exorbitant demand of 13,650*l.* was wisely complied with, rather than that so glorious a picture should be lost to a collection so poor.

The *Portrait* of a *Lady*, by *LUCAS CRANACH*, bought in this same year 1857, was (inasmuch as it has something characteristic and good about it) justifiable enough, but the *VAN EYCK*—that master being, as has been said above, already nobly represented—need not have been bought. A certain wild sadness which characterises the *Madonna* and *Saints* by *PHILIPPINO LIPPI*, pleads for the legitimacy of its admission to the collection, and the *GHIRLANDAIO Madonna* was also an allowable purchase, but the outlay of so large a sum as 3155*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* on the *Martyrdom* of *St. Sebastian* by *ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO*, is not to be exceeded in any way; the only interesting thing about the picture being the enlightenment it affords us as to the way in which the archers of those days used to string their cross-bows—a wrinkle, however, which is not worth 3155*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

The Eye-witness goes on to state that, still in the eventful year 1857, a collection of pictures from the *LOMBARDI-BALDI* Palace at Florence entered this country, and that the sum of 7035*l.* departed from it to compensate the *Lombardi-Baldi* for this loss. That loss they no doubt bore, philosophically enough. Their collection consisting mainly of red-nosed saints and diagrams in the manner of those drawn by our boy population on such blank walls as come within their ken. Seven thousand pounds for this!

From the year 1857 to '59, the pictures secured to the country are none of them very remarkable. There is an excusable *QUESTIN MATSY*s to represent the name; an inexcusable *ROMANINO* costing 904*l.*; a *BORGONE* costing 430*l.* The *Portrait* of a *Lady* by *AUTONLI MORO* has character and is good; it was bought of *MR. NIEWENHUIS* for 900*l.* There is also among the purchases of this period, a *Portrait* of an Italian Nobleman by one *ALESSANDRO BONVICINO*, called *Il Moretto*, which is remarkable as exhibiting a greater freedom in the attitude than is generally seen in the portraits of the time. It is a good picture, but looks at first sight like a theatrical portrait of *Richard the Third*. For the rest, the *St. Francis Glorified*, of *PHILIPPINO LIPPI*, the *Dead Christ* of *PALMEZZANO*, the atrocious *Altar-piece* of *LORENZO COSTA*, and the *Madonna* of *MORETTO*, may be classed among the unnecessary purchases; the *St. Dominic* of *ZOFFO* and the *Madonna* of *BASAITI*, among the allowable ones, with which also may go to the *TREVISO*, from the *Northwick Gallery*, and the *Dead Christ* of *CRIVELLI*, which has feeling, in spite of its quaintness; and perhaps the *Madonna* of *DA COMIGLIANO*. There is a good *Portrait* of *MA-*

SACCIO by himself, and a good Portrait of a Lady by ZELOTTI. Still none of these, not even the admissible ones, are remarkable pictures, or such as will evoke any degree of enthusiasm; while there is one of the purchases of this period, the Infancy of Jupiter by JULIO ROMANO, which cost 920*l.*, and which is so vile as to call for an especial censure and reprobation. It is so bad a picture that if one saw it on the blind of a coffee-shop window, one would feel no surprise. It is hung in a central position, and is framed and glazed in a manner so magnificent, as only to make its badness more conspicuous. This plan of putting vile pictures in the most costly and magnificent frames and glasses does nothing to mitigate their vileness, and is a system carried so far at the National Gallery as to be highly suggestive of jobbery. The two RUYSDAELS purchased about this time are not satisfactory examples of the master, and were bought of a certain COUNT STOLBERG for 1187*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*, and 1069*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.* respectively.

Sir George Beaumont remarks that he is well acquainted with the pictures in question, and that it seems to him that they want that rich brown tone which should always pervade the works of this master, and without which no landscape is complete.

The Eye-witness, in resuming his evidence, observes that the next purchases made for the National Collection are comprised in what is called the BEAUCOUSIN lot, which came into the possession of the country in this present year 1860. Here, again, a number of bad pictures have to be bought, in order to secure one or two good, and three or four that are unobjectionable, but which the collection would do just as well without. Indeed, this is a sorry bargain at 9205*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.*, and one looks daily in the Times for an acknowledgment on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the receipt of this sum from M. BEAUCOUSIN as conscience-money. The gem of this collection, for which probably it was purchased, is the Head of Ariosto, by TITIAN. Besides this, there are some nine or ten allowable pictures, good characteristic portraits, or works which their high finish renders admissible. The disgusting but highly-wrought BRONZINO, placed in a conspicuous position in the principal room, is not included among these. Do these allowable pictures, and the one prize of the Ariosto, justify the Beaucousin purchase?

Dr. Waghorn remarks—not for the first time—that it is desirable that the different masters of the different periods should be represented in our National Collection.

Witness replies, that, to carry this to excess, as has been recently done, is to turn that collection into a museum. A specimen of GIOTTO, of TADDEO GADDI, of VAN EYCK, of PERUGINO, would be enough for every chronological purpose; there would be no necessity for spending thousands on endless repetitions of the same things by these men, and their obscure disciples. The public money has been frittered away in timid purchases, when by concentration some half-dozen or even fewer fine pictures might

have been acquired to the country. What is there to show for the 78,185*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.* which has been spent in Art by the Trustees of the National Gallery since the year 1844. The finest picture acquired since that time is unquestionably the PAUL VERONESE which was secured by this very plan of concentration, which witness recommends. A nation like this wants, for its national collection, the finest pictures in the world, not merely curious pictures, or such as are to be found in many private houses. Witness hopes that the Jury will perceive that he goes to no excesses in his views, that he commends some of the purchases made by the trustees while he condemns others; and that he does not affirm that the school of the pre-Raphaelite painters should not be represented at all, but only that it should not altogether overwhelm us, and that a collection paid for by the public, and got together for the public, should give that public pleasure.

The PAUL VERONESE was a single picture acquired at an enormous, an almost unprecedented, price. Still that is not a thing to be complained of, as we were not paying for a quantity of things we did not want, but simply giving an immense sum for what we *did* want. Would it not be better to save the money that goes in these timid purchases of a quantity of paltry pictures at paltry prices, and let our fund for Art-purchases accumulate till it reaches an amount which may be large enough to tempt some of the proprietors of the really fine works which are lighted now by the dirty windows of the Italian palaces?

The ghost of Sir George Beaumont having discovered at this juncture that he was expected in a distinguished Art-circle, where an eminent medium was at that moment awaiting his rap very impatiently, the inquiry on the subject of the National Collection was adjourned for a week.

#### NELSON.

##### AN OLD MAN-O'-WAR'S MAN'S YARN.

AY, ay, good neighbours, I have seen  
Him! sure as God's my life;  
One of his chosen crew I've been;  
Haven't I, old goodwife?  
God bless your dear eyes! didn't you vow  
To marry me any weather,  
If I came back with limbs enow  
To keep my soul together?  
Brave as a lion was our Nel,  
And gentle as a lamb:  
Tell you it warms my blood to tell  
The tale—grey as I am—  
It makes the old life in me climb,  
It sets my soul a-swim;  
I live twice over every time  
That I can talk of him.  
Our best beloved of all the brave  
That ever for freedom fought;  
And all his wonders of the wave  
For fatherland were wrought!  
He was the manner of man to show  
How victories may be won;  
So swift, you scarcely saw the blow;  
You look'd—the deed was done.

You should have seen him as he trod  
The deck, our joy, and pride!  
You should have seen him, like a god  
Of storm, his war-horse ride!  
You should have seen him as he stood  
Fighting for his good land,  
With all the iron of soul and blood  
Turned to a sword in hand.

He sailed his ships for work; he bore  
His sword for battle-wear;  
His creed was "Best man to the fore!"  
And he was always there.

Up any peak of peril where  
There was but room for one:  
The only thing he did not dare  
Was any death to shun.

The Nelson touch his men he taught,  
And his great stride to keep;  
His faithful fellows round him fought  
A thousand heroes deep.

With a red pride of life, and hot  
For him, their blood ran free;  
They "minded not the showers of shot,  
No more than peas," said he.

The tyrant saw our sea-king thwart  
His landing on our isle;  
He gnashed his teeth, he gnawed his heart,  
At Nelson of the Nile,  
Who set his fleet in flames, to light  
The lion to his prey,  
And lead destruction through the night  
Upon his dreadful way.

Around the world he drove his game,  
And ran his glorious race,  
Nor rested till he hunted them  
From off the ocean's face;  
Like that old war-dog, who, till death,  
Hung to the vessel's side  
Till hands were lopped, and then with teeth  
He held on till he died.

Oh, he could do the deeds that set  
Old fighters' hearts a-fire;  
The edge of every spirit whet,  
And every arm inspire.  
Yet I have seen upon his face  
The tears that, as they roll,  
Show what a light of saintly grace  
May clothe a sailor's soul.

And when our darling went to meet  
Trafalgar's Judgment-day,  
The people knelt down in the street  
To bless him on his way.  
He felt the country of his love  
Watching him from afar;  
It saw him through the battle move:  
His heaven was in that star!

Magnificently glorious sight  
It was in that great dawn!  
Like one vast sapphire flashing light,  
The sea, just breathing, shone!  
Their ships, fresh painted, stood up tall  
And stately: ours were grim  
And weatherworn, but one and all  
In rare good fighting trim.

Our spirits all were flying light,  
And into battle sped,  
Straining for it on wings of might,  
With feet of springy tread;  
The battle shone on every face;  
Its fire in every eye;

Our sailor blood at swiftest pace  
To catch the victory nigh.

His proudly-wasted face, wave-worn,  
Was beaming and serene;  
I felt the brave, bright spirit burn  
There, all too plainly seen;  
As though the sword this time was drawn  
For ever from the sheath,  
And when its work to-day was done  
All would be dark in death.

His deep eyes glowed like lamps of night  
Set in the porch of power;  
The deed unborn was kindled bright  
Within them at that hour!  
The purpose, welded at white heat,  
Cried, like some visible Fate,  
"To-day, we must not merely beat;  
We must annihilate."

He smiled to see the Frenchman show  
His reckoning for retreat,  
With Cadiz port on his lee-bow;  
And held him then half-beat.  
They showed no colours, till we drew  
Them out to strike with there!  
Old Victory, for a prize or two,  
Had flags enough to spare.

Mast-high the famous signal ran;  
Breathless we caught each word:  
"England expects that every man  
Will do his duty." Lord,  
You should have seen our faces! heard  
Us cheering, row on row,  
Like men before some furnace stirred  
To a fiery fearful glow!

Good Collingwood our lee-line led,  
And cut their centre through.  
"See how he goes in!" Nelson said,  
As his first broadside flew,  
And near four hundred foemen fell.  
Up went another cheer.  
"Ah, what would Nelson give," said Coll,  
"But to be with us here!"

We grimly kept our vanward path;  
Over us hummed their shot;  
But, silently, we reined our wrath,  
Held on, and answered not,  
Till we could grip them face to face,  
And pound them for our own,  
Or hug them in a war embrace,  
Till they or we went down.

How calm he was! when first he felt  
The sharp edge of that fight.  
Cabined with God alone he knelt,  
The prayer still lay in light  
Upon his face, that used to shine  
In battle—flash with life,  
As though the glorious blood ran wine,  
Dancing with that wild strife.

"Fight for us, thou Almighty One!  
Give victory once again!  
And if I fall, thy will be done.  
Amen, Amen, Amen!"

With such a voice he bade good-by,  
The mournfullest old smile wore:  
"Farewell! God bless you, Blackwood, I  
Shall never see you more."

And four hours after, he had done  
With winds and troubled foam.  
The Reaper was borne dead upon  
Our load of harvest home.



Not till he knew the old flag flew  
Alone on all the deep;  
Then said he, "Hardy, is that you?  
Kiss me." And fell asleep.

Well, 'twas his chosen death below  
The deck in triumph trod;  
'Tis well. A sailor's soul should go  
From his good ship to God.  
He would have chosen death aboard,  
From all the crowns of rest;  
And burial with the patriot sword  
Upon the victor's breast.

"Not a great sinner." No, dear heart,  
God grant in our death-pain,  
We may have played as well our part,  
And feel as free from stain.  
We see the spots on such a star,  
Because it burned so bright;  
But on the side next God they are  
All lost in greater light.

And so he went upon his way,  
A higher deck to walk,  
Or sit in some eternal day,  
And of the old time talk  
With sailors old, who, on that coast,  
Welcome the homeward bound;  
Where many a gallant soul we've lost,  
And Franklin will be found.  
Where amidst London's roar and moil  
That Cross of Peace upstands,  
Like martyr with his heavenward smile,  
And flame-lit, lifted hands,  
There lies the dark and mouldered dust;  
But that magnanimous  
And mighty seaman's soul, I trust,  
Is living yet with us.

#### THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

THE chance use of the word "Tramp" in my last paper, brought that numerous fraternity so vividly before my mind's eye, that I had no sooner laid down my pen than a compulsion was upon me to take it up again, and make notes of the Tramps whom I perceived on all the summer roads in all directions.

Whenever a tramp sits down to rest by the wayside, he sits with his legs in a dry ditch; and whenever he goes to sleep (which is very often indeed), he goes to sleep on his back. Yonder, by the high road, glaring white in the bright sunshine, lies, on the dusty bit of turf under the bramble-bush that fences the coppice from the highway, the tramp of the order savage, fast asleep. He lies on the broad of his back, with his face turned up to the sky, and one of his ragged arms loosely thrown across his face. His bundle (what can be the contents of that mysterious bundle, to make it worth his while to carry it about?) is thrown down beside him, and the waking woman with him sits with her legs in the ditch, and her back to the road. She wears her bonnet rakishly perched on the front of her head, to shade her face from the sun in walking, and she ties her skirts round her in conventionally tight tramp-fashion with a sort of apron. You can seldom catch sight of her, resting thus, without seeing her in a despondently defiant manner doing something to her

hair or her bonnet, and glancing at you between her fingers. She does not often go to sleep herself in the daytime, but will sit for any length of time beside the man. And his slumberous propensities would not seem to be referable to the fatigue of carrying the bundle, for she carries it much oftener and further than he. When they are afoot, you will mostly find him slouching on ahead, in a gruff temper, while she lags heavily behind with the burden. He is given to personally correcting her, too—which phase of his character develops itself oftenest, on benches outside alehouse doors—and she appears to become strongly attached to him for these reasons; it may usually be noticed that when the poor creature has a bruised face, she is the most affectionate. He has no occupation whatever, this order of tramp, and has no object whatever in going anywhere. He will sometimes call himself a brickmaker, or a sawyer, but only when he takes an imaginative flight. He generally represents himself, in a vague way, as looking out for a job of work; but he never did work, he never does, and he never never will. It is a favourite fiction with him, however (as if he were the most industrious character on earth), that *you* never work; and as he goes past your garden and sees you looking at your flowers, you will overhear him growl, with a strong sense of contrast, "*You* are a lucky hidle devil, *you* are!"

The slinking tramp is of the same hopeless order, and has the same injured conviction on him that you were born to whatever you possess, and never did anything to get it; but he is of a less audacious disposition. He will stop before your gate, and say to his female companion with an air of constitutional humility and propitiation—to edify any one who may be within hearing behind a blind or a bush—"This is a sweet spot, ain't it? A lovely spot! And I wonder if they'd give two poor footsore travellers like me and you, a drop of fresh water out of such a pretty gen-teel crib? We'd take it very kind on 'em, wouldn't us? Wery kind, upon my word, us would!" He has a quick sense of a dog in the vicinity, and will extend his modestly-injured propitiation to the dog chained up in your yard: remarking, as he slinks at the yard gate, "Ah! You are a foine breed o' dog, too, and *you* ain't kep for nothink! I'd take it wery kind o' your master if he'd elp a traveller and his woife as envies no gentlefolk their good fortun, wi' a bit o' your broken wittles. He'd never know the want of it, nor more would you. Don't bark like that, at poor persons as never done you no arm; the poor is down-trodden and broke enough without that; O don't!" He generally heaves a prodigious sigh in moving away, and always looks up the lane and down the lane, and up the road and down the road, before going on.

Both of these orders of tramp are of a very robust habit; let the hard-working labourer at whose cottage door they prowl and beg, have the ague never so badly, these tramps are sure to be in good health.

There is another kind of tramp, whom you

encounter this bright summer day—say, on a road with the sea-breeze making its dust lively, and sails of ships in the blue distance beyond the slope of Down. As you walk enjoyingly on, you descry in the perspective at the bottom of a steep hill up which your way lies, a figure that appears to be sitting airily on a gate, whistling in a cheerful and disengaged manner. As you approach nearer to it, you observe the figure to slide down from the gate, to desist from whistling, to uncock its hat, to become tender of foot, to depress its head and elevate its shoulders, and to present all the characteristics of profound despondency. Arriving at the bottom of the hill and coming close to the figure, you observe it to be the figure of a shabby young man. He is moving painfully forward, in the direction in which you are going, and his mind is so preoccupied with his misfortunes that he is not aware of your approach until you are close upon him at the hill-foot. When he is aware of you, you discover him to be a remarkably well-behaved young man, and a remarkably well-spoken young man. You know him to be well-behaved, by his respectful manner of touching his hat; you know him to be well-spoken, by his smooth manner of expressing himself. He says in a flowing confidential voice, and without punctuation, "I ask your pardon sir but if you would excuse the liberty of being so addressed upon the public highway by one who is almost reduced to rags though it is not always been so and by no fault of his own but through ill elth in his family and many unmerited sufferings it would be a great obligation sir to know the time." You give the well-spoken young man, the time. The well-spoken young man, keeping well up with you, resumes: "I am aware sir that it is a liberty to intrude a further question on a gentleman walking for his entertainment but might I make so bold as ask the favour of the way to Dover sir and about the distance?" You inform the well-spoken young man that the way to Dover is straight on, and the distance some eighteen miles. The well-spoken young man becomes greatly agitated. "In the condition to which I am reduced," says he, "I could not ope to reach Dover before dark even if my shoes were in a state to take me there or my feet were in a state to old out over the flinty road and were not on the bare ground of which any gentleman has the means to satisfy himself by looking Sir may I take the liberty of speaking to you?" As the well-spoken young man keeps so well up with you that you can't prevent his taking the liberty of speaking to you, he goes on, with fluency: "Sir it is not begging that is my intention for I was brought up by the best of mothers and begging is not my trade I should not know sir how to follow it as a trade if such were my shameful wishes for the best of mothers long taught otherwise and in the best of ones though now reduced to take the present liberty on the Iway Sir my business was the law-stationering and I was favourably known to the Solicitor-General the Attorney-General the

majority of the Judges and the ole of the legal profession but through ill elth in my family and the treachery of a friend for whom I became security and he no other than my own wife's brother the brother of my own wife I was cast forth with my tender partner and three young children not to beg for I will sooner die of deprivation but to make my way to the seaport town of Dover where I have a relative i in respect not only that will assist me but that would trust me with untold gold Sir in appier times and hare this calamity fell upon me I made for my amusement when I little thought that I should ever need it excepting for my air this"—here the well-spoken young man puts his hand into his breast—"this comb! Sir I implore you in the name of charity to purchase a tortoiseshell comb which is a genuine article at any price that your humanity may put upon it and may the blessings of a ouseless family awaiting with beating arts the return of a husband and a father from Dover upon the cold stone seats of London Bridge ever attend you Sir may I take the liberty of speaking to you I implore you to buy this comb!" By this time, being a reasonably good walker, you will have been too much for the well-spoken young man, who will stop short and express his disgust and his want of breath, in a long expectoration, as you leave him behind.

Towards the end of the same walk, on the same bright summer day, at the corner of the next little town or village, you may find another kind of tramp, embodied in the persons of a most exemplary couple whose only improvidence appears to have been, that they spent the last of their little All on soap. They are a man and woman, spotless to behold—John Anderson, with the frost on his short smock-frock instead of his "pow," attended by Mrs. Anderson. John is over ostentatious of the frost upon his raiment, and wears a curious and, you would say, an almost unnecessary demonstration of girdle of white linen wound about his waist—a girdle, snowy as Mrs. Anderson's apron. This cleanliness was the expiring effort of the respectable couple, and nothing then remained to Mr. Anderson but to get chalked upon his spade in snow-white copy-book characters, HUGGERY! and to sit down here. Yes; one thing more remained to Mr. Anderson—his character; Monarchs could not deprive him of his hard-earned character. Accordingly, as you come up with this spectacle of virtue in distress, Mrs. Anderson rises, and with a decent curtsy presents for your consideration a certificate from a Doctor of Divinity, the reverend the Vicar of Upper Dodgington, who informs his Christian friends and all whom it may concern that the bearers, John Anderson and lawful wife, are persons to whom you cannot be too liberal. This benevolent pastor omitted no work of his hands to fit the good couple out, for with half an eye you can recognise his autograph on the spade.

Another class of tramp is a man, the most valuable part of whose stock-in-trade is a highly perplexed demeanour. He is got up like a

countryman, and you will often come upon the poor fellow, while he is endeavouring to decipher the inscription on a milestone—quite a fruitless endeavour, for he cannot read. He asks your pardon, he truly does (he is very slow of speech, this tramp, and he looks in a bewildered way all round the prospect while he talks to you), but all of us should do as we would be done by, and he'll take it kind if you'll put a power man in the right road fur to jine his eldest son as has broke his leg bad in the masoning, and is in this heere Orspit'l as is wrote down by Squire Pouncerby's own hand as would not tell a lie fur no man. He then produces from under his dark frock (being always very slow and perplexed) a neat but worn old leathern purse, from which he takes a scrap of paper. On this scrap of paper is written, by Squire Pouncerby, of The Grove, "Please to direct the Bearer, a poor but very worthy man, to the Sussex County Hospital, near Brighton"—a matter of some difficulty at the moment, seeing that the request comes suddenly upon you in the depths of Hertfordshire. The more you endeavour to indicate where Brighton is—when you have with the greatest difficulty remembered—the less the devoted father can be made to comprehend, and the more obtusely he stares at the prospect; whereby, being reduced to extremity, you recommend the faithful parent to begin by going to Saint Albans, and present him with half-a-crown. It does him good, no doubt, but scarcely helps him forward, since you find him lying drunk that same evening in the wheelwright's sawpit under the shed where the felled trees are, opposite the sign of the Three Jolly Hedgers.

But the most vicious, by far, of all the idle tramps, is the tramp who pretends to have been a gentleman. "Educated," he writes from the village beer-shop in pale ink of a ferruginous complexion; "educated at Trin. Coll. Cam.—nursed in the lap of affluence—once in my small way the patron of the Muses," &c. &c. &c.—surely a sympathetic mind will not withhold a trifle, to help him on to the market-town where he thinks of giving a Lecture to the *fruges consumere nati*, on things in general? This shameful creature lolling about hedge tap-rooms in his ragged clothes, now so far from being black that they look as if they never can have been black, is more selfish and insolent than even the savage tramp. He would sponge on the poorest boy for a farthing, and spurn him when he had got it; he would interpose (if he could get anything by it) between the baby and the mother's breast. So much lower than the company he keeps, for his maudlin assumption of being higher, this pitiless rascal blights the summer road as he maunders on between the luxuriant hedges: where (to my thinking) even the wild convolvulus and rose and sweetbriar, are the worse for his going by, and need time to recover from the taint of him in the air.

The young fellows who trudge along bare-foot, five or six together, their boots slung over

their shoulders, their shabby bundles under their arms, their sticks newly cut from some roadside wood, are not eminently prepossessing, but are much less objectionable. There is a tramp-fellowship among them. They pick one another up at resting stations, and go on in companies. They always go at a fast swing—though they generally limp too—and there is invariably one of the company who has much ado to keep up with the rest. They generally talk about horses, and any other means of locomotion than walking: or, one of the company relates some recent experiences of the road—which are always disputes and difficulties. As for example. "So as I'm a standing at the pump in the market, blest if there don't come up a Beadle, and he ses, 'Mustn't stand here,' he ses. 'Why not?' I ses. 'No beggars allowed in this town,' he ses. 'Who's a beggar?' I ses. 'You are,' he ses. 'Who ever see me beg? Did you?' I ses. 'Then you're a tramp,' he ses. 'I'd rather be that, than a Beadle,' I ses." (The company express great approval.) "'Would you,' he ses to me. 'Yes I would,' I ses to him. 'Well,' he ses, 'anyhow, get out of this town.' 'Why, blow your little town!' I ses, 'who wants to be in it? Wot does your dirty little town mean by comin' and stickin' itself in the road to anywhere? Why don't you get a shovel and a barrer, and clear your town out o' people's way?'" (The company expressing the highest approval and laughing aloud, they all go down the hill.)

Then, there are the tramp handicraft men. Are they not all over England, in this Midsummer time? Where does the lark sing, the corn grow, the mill turn, the river run, and they are not among the lights and shadows, tinkering, chair-mending, umbrella-mending, clock-mending, knife-grinding? Surely, a pleasant thing, if we were in that condition of life, to grind our way through Kent, Sussex, and Surrey. For the first six weeks or so, we should see the sparks we ground off, fiery bright against a background of green wheat and green leaves. A little later, and the ripe harvest would pale our sparks from red to yellow, until we got the dark newly-turned land for a background again, and they were red once more. By that time, we should have ground our way to the sea cliffs, and the whirl of our wheel would be lost in the breaking of the waves. Our next variety in sparks would be derived from contrast with the gorgeous medley of colours in the autumn woods, and, by the time we had ground our way round to the heathy lands between Reigate and Croydon, doing a properous stroke of business all along, we should show like a little firework in the light frosty air, and be the next best thing to the blacksmith's forge. Very agreeable, too, to go on a chair-mending tour. What judges we should be of rushes, and how knowingly (with a sheaf and a bottomless chair at our back) we should lounge on bridges, looking over at osier-beds. Among all the innumerable occupations that cannot possibly be transacted without the assistance of lookers-on, chair-mending may take a station in the first rank. When we sat down



with our backs against the barn or the public-house, and began to mend, what a sense of popularity would grow upon us. When all the children came to look at us, and the tailor, and the general dealer, and the farmer who had been giving a small order at the little saddler's, and the groom from the great house, and the publican, and even the two skittle-players (and here note that, howsoever busy all the rest of village human-kind may be, there will always be two people with leisure to play at skittles, wherever village skittles are), what encouragement would be on us to plait and weave! No one looks at us while we plait and weave these words. Clock-mending again. Except for the slight inconvenience of carrying a clock under our arm, and the monotony of making the bell go, whenever we came to a human habitation, what a pleasant privilege to give a voice to the dumb cottage-clock, and set it talking to the cottage family again. Likewise we foresee great interest in going round by the park plantations, under the overhanging boughs (hares, rabbits, partridges, and pheasants, scudding like mad across and across the chequered ground before us), and so over the park ladder, and through the wood, until we came to the Keeper's lodge. Then would the Keeper be discoverable at his door, in a deep nest of leaves, smoking his pipe. Then, on our accosting him in the way of our trade, would he call to Mrs. Keeper, respecting "t'ould clock" in the kitchen. Then, would Mrs. Keeper ask us into the lodge, and on due examination we should offer to make a good job of it for eighteenpence: which offer, being accepted, would set us tinkling and clinking among the chubby awe-struck little Keepers for an hour and more. So completely to the family's satisfaction should we achieve our work, that the Keeper would mention how that there was something wrong with the bell of the turret stable-clock up at the Hall, and that if we thought good of going up to the housekeeper on the chance of that job too, why he would take us. Then, should we go, among the branching oaks and the deep fern, by silent ways of mystery known to the Keeper, seeing the herd glancing here and there as we went along, until we came to the old Hall, solemn and grand. Under the Terrace Flower Garden, and round by the stables, would the Keeper take us in, and as we passed we should observe how spacious and stately the stables, and how fine the painting of the horses' names over their stalls, and how solitary all: the family being in London. Then, should we find ourselves presented to the housekeeper, sitting, in hushed state, at needlework, in a bay-window looking out upon a mighty grim red-brick quadrangle, guarded by stone lions disrespectfully throwing somersaults over the escutcheons of the noble family. Then, our services accepted and we insinuated with a candle into the stable turret, we should find it to be a mere question of pendulum, but one that would hold us until dark. Then, should we fall to work, with a general impression of Ghosts being about, and of pictures in-doors that of a certainty came

out of their frames and "walked," if the family would only own it. Then, should we work and work, until the day gradually turned to dusk, and even until the dusk gradually turned to dark. Our task at length accomplished, we should be taken into an enormous servants' hall, and there regaled with beef and bread, and powerful ale. Then, paid freely, we should be at liberty to go, and should be told by a pointing helper to keep round over yinder by the blasted ash, and so straight through the woods, till we should see the town-lights right afore us. Then, feeling lonesome, should we desire upon the whole, that the ash had not been blasted, or that the helper had had the manners not to mention it. However, we should keep on, all right, until suddenly the stable bell would strike ten in the dolefullest way, quite chilling our blood, though we had so lately taught him how to acquit himself. Then, as we went on, should we recall old stories, and dimly consider what it would be most advisable to do, in the event of a tall figure, all in white, with saucer eyes, coming up and saying, "I want you to come to a churchyard and mend a church clock. Follow me!" Then, should we make a burst to get clear of the trees, and should soon find ourselves in the open, with the town-lights bright ahead of us. So should we lie that night at the ancient sign of the Crispin and Crispanus, and rise early in the morning to be betimes on tramp again.

Bricklayers often tramp, in twos and threes, lying by night at their "lodges" which are scattered all over the country. Bricklaying is another of the occupations that can by no means be transacted in rural parts, without the assistance of spectators—of as many as can be convened. In thinly-peopled spots, I have known bricklayers on tramp, coming up with bricklayers at work, to be so sensible of the indispensability of lookers-on, that they themselves have set up in that capacity, and have been unable to subside into the acceptance of a proffered share in the job, for two or three days together. Sometimes, the "navvy," on tramp, with an extra pair of half-boots over his shoulder, a bag, a bottle, and a can, will take a similar part in a job of excavation, and will look at it without engaging in it, until all his money is gone. The current of my uncommercial pursuits caused me only last summer to want a little body of workmen for a certain spell of work in a pleasant part of the country; and I was at one time honoured with the attendance of as many as seven-and-twenty, who were looking at six.

Who can be familiar with any rustic highway in the summer-time, without storing up knowledge of the many tramps who go from one oasis of town or village to another, to sell a stock in trade, apparently not worth a shilling when sold? Shrimps are a favourite commodity for this kind of speculation, and so are cakes of a soft and spongy character, coupled with Spanish nuts, and brandy balls. The stock is carried on the head in a basket, and, between the head and the basket, are the trestles on which the stock is displayed at trading times. Fleet of foot, but

a careworn class of tramp this, mostly; with a certain stiffness of neck, occasioned by much anxious balancing of baskets; and also with a long Chinese sort of eye, which an overweighted forehead would seem to have squeezed into that form.

On the hot dusty roads near seaport towns and great rivers, behold the tramping Soldier. And if you should happen never to have asked yourself whether his uniform is suited to his work, perhaps the poor fellow's appearance as he comes distressfully towards you, with his absurdly tight jacket unbuttoned, his neck-gear in his hand, and his legs well chafed by his trousers of baize, may suggest the personal inquiry, how you think *you* would like it. Much better the tramping Sailor, although his cloth is somewhat too thick for land service. But why the tramping merchant-mate should put on a black velvet waistcoat, for a chalky country in the dog-days, is one of the great secrets of nature that will never be discovered.

I have my eye upon a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road-dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with the distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean, like a man's life. To gain the milestone here, which the moss, primroses, violets, blue-bells, and wild roses, would soon render illegible but for peering travellers pushing them aside with their sticks, you must come up a steep hill, come which way you may. So, all the tramps with carts or caravans—the Gipsy-tramp, the Show-tramp, the Cheap Jack—and it impossible to resist the temptations of the place, and all turn the horse loose when they come to it, and boil the pot. Bless the place, I love the ashes of the vagabond fires that have scorched its grass! What tramp children do I see here, attired in a handful of rags, making a gymnasium of the shafts of the cart, making a feather-bed of the flints and brambles, making a toy of the hobbled old horse who is not much more like a horse than any cheap toy would be! Here, do I encounter the cart of mats and brooms and baskets—with all thoughts of business given to the evening wind—with the stew made and being served out—with Cheap Jack and Dear Jill striking soft music out of the plates that are rattled like warlike cymbals when put up for auction at fairs and markets—their minds so influenced (no doubt) by the melody of the nightingales as they begin to sing in the woods behind them, that if I were to propose to deal, they would sell me anything at cost price. On this hallowed ground has it been my happy privilege (let me whisper it), to behold the White-haired Lady with the pink eyes, eating meat-pie with the Giant: while, by the hedge-side, on the box of blankets which I knew contained the snakes, were set forth the cups and saucers and the teapot. It was on an evening in August, that I chanced upon this ravishing spectacle, and I noticed that, whereas the Giant reclined half concealed beneath the overhanging boughs and seemed indifferent to

Nature, the white hair of the gracious Lady streamed free in the breath of evening, and her pink eyes found pleasure in the landscape. I heard only a single sentence of her uttering, yet it bespoke a talent for modest repartee. The ill-mannered Giant—accused he his evil race!—had interrupted the Lady in some remark, and, as I passed that enchanted corner of the wood, she gently reproved him, with the words, "Now, Cobby;" Cobby! so short a name!—"ain't one fool enough to talk at a time?"

Within appropriate distance of this magic ground, though not so near it as that the song trolled from tap or bench at door, can invade its woodland silence, is a little hostelry which no man possessed of a penny was ever known to pass in warm weather. Before its entrance, are certain pleasant trimmed lines: likewise, a cool well, with so musical a bucket-handle that its fall upon the bucket rim will make a horse prick up its ears and neigh, upon the drougthy road half a mile off. This is a house of great resort for haymaking tramps and harvest tramps, inasmuch that as they sit within, drinking their mugs of beer, their relinquished scythes and reaping-hooks glare out of the open windows, as if the whole establishment were a family war-coach of Ancient Britons. Later in the season, the whole country-side, for miles and miles, will swarm with hopping tramps. They come in families, men, women, and children, every family provided with a bundle of bedding, an iron pot, a number of babies, and too often with some poor sick creature quite unfit for the rough life, for whom they suppose the smell of the fresh hop to be a sovereign remedy. Many of these hoppers are Irish, but many come from London. They crowd all the roads, and camp under all the hedges and on all the scraps of common-land, and live among and upon the hops until they are all picked, and the hop-gardens, so beautiful through the summer, look as if they had been laid waste by an invading army. Then, there is a vast exodus of tramps out of the county; and if you ride or drive round any turn of any road, at more than a foot pace, you will be bewildered to find that you have charged into the bosom of fifty families, and that there are splashing up all around you, in the utmost prodigality of confusion, bundles of bedding, babies, iron pots, and a good-humoured multitude of both sexes and all ages, equally divided between perspiration and intoxication.

#### ARTICLES OF UNBELIEF.

My mind, I dare say, is as richly stored with fallacies and crotchets as the mind of any one of my neighbours. But I am happy to say that my experience of the world has enabled me to filter off many vulgar errors, and for the benefit of that world I here publish some results of the filtration:

1. I do not believe that any one ever liked Banbury cakes or thick gingerbread after the age of fifteen. Neither do I believe that any one ever tasted more than once in his life certain crinkly comfits that are made in the shape of

rings and shells, and strongly flavoured with cardamoms. As for Ally-campane (which I am told should be spelled "Elecampane"), I believe it as pure a fiction as a centaur or a hippogriff, devised by elderly folks to give a false impression of the joys of their childhood.

2. I do not believe that the large, varnished, hollow-looking fishes which decorate the windows of tackle-shops and the walls of certain hostels were ever caught by rod and line. How they were caught I do not pretend to conjecture, but I am open to the conviction that they are manufactured of oilskin, bladder, greased paper, or any other semi-pellucid material. When I am told that in the portion of the river adjoining a certain tavern patronised by anglers, there is a jack that weighs an incredible number of pounds, and that the landlord will "stand" a champagne supper whenever it is caught, I am not satisfied with suspecting that the banquet will never take place, but I utterly disbelieve the existence of the fish.

3. I do not believe that any one ever succeeded in lulling himself to sleep by an abortive attempt to count a million.

4. I do not believe that the man who himself saw a ghost was ever found in any assembly however large, though I grant that the man whose friend saw a ghost is to be found in every assembly however small.

5. I do not believe that the John Dorey and the Red Mullet are entitled to that pre-eminence among fishes which is awarded to them by fantastical epieures. When I am told that Samuel Foote went once a year to some place in Devonshire on purpose to eat John Dorey, I should be inclined to think him a fool for his pains, were I not much more strongly inclined to disbelieve the statement altogether. I do not believe that plovers' eggs deserve to be honoured with a mossy throne denied to the produce of the domestic hen and the duck. Far from believing that a galantine of turkey is the choicest delicacy placed upon a supper-table, I believe no one would touch it who could get anything else to eat.

6. I do not believe that any one ever saw a farce entitled John Jones, although it is frequently played in London, generally after twelve o'clock at night.

7. I do not believe that any gentleman who tries to tell his fortune by cards ever arrives at any result that will enable him to form even an incorrect opinion as to his future career. I do not believe that the information contained in six-penny "dream-books" could be applied directly or indirectly to any dream dreamed by mortal man since the days of Joseph and his brethren.

8. I do not believe that John Bull is the finest comedy in the English language, or that *Bombastes Furioso* is the best burlesque that ever was written.

9. I do not believe that any one ever became a classical scholar by the aid of the Hamiltonian system, or that any one ever attained even a smattering of Hebrew by studying that language "without points."

10. I greatly disbelieve in that passionate love

for Dante which is often professed by young ladies who have just begun to study Italian, but this disbelief is not accompanied by the slightest doubt as to the excellence of the poet.

11. I do not believe that anybody ever derived any pleasure or profit from eating water-cresses with his tea.

12. I do not believe that there ever was a pantomime in which Harlequin and Clown carried out a plot as consecutive as that of a tragedy or comedy, though I am informed, every Christmas, that in certain "good old times" such pantomimes were common, if not universal.

13. I do not believe that any one ever gained an appetite for dinner by tossing off a glass of a detestable compound called "gin-and-bitters," and my opinion is precisely the same with regard to a drink which the French term "absinthe."

14. I do not believe that any man who set up for an "original" ever allowed his eccentricities to interfere with his pocket or his personal convenience.

15. I do not believe that there is such a thing as a talking bird. Not only have I wasted a small fortune on starlings that did not even attempt to speak, but I have listened by the hour together to choice grey parrots while they made a noise which an admiring crowd pronounced to signify "Pretty Poll," and which I am in a position to affirm would just as well denote any other combination of syllables similarly accented, and with somewhat similar vowels, as, for instance, "Witty Tom." And I am convinced that those persons who complain of the opprobrious epithets with which they are accosted by parrots, and attribute their rudeness to the bad educational system of the sailors who "brought them over," are simply the victims of their own morbid imagination.

## BLACK TARN.

### IN THREE PORTIONS. CHAPTER I.

"LAURENCE, I tell you again, your only chance is a good marriage."

"I know that, mother, by heart; you have told me so before; oftener than you seem to remember."

"And my anxiety dispenses you?"

"No; but your importunity wearies me."

"You are ungrateful, Laurence, and disrespectful," said Mrs. Grantley, in an unmoved voice, but with stately disapprobation.

"Am I so? I am afraid it is my way," said Laurence, indifferently. "However," he added, rising and lounging against the chimney-piece, where he stood, stroking his moustache, "we need not quarrel. My father and you managed to diminish the old estate by some thousands: I have not been behindhand; and now we are both doing our best—you on your side, I on mine—to bring the whole thing to the dogs. I do not blame you, but you are horribly extravagant; upon my soul you are. So am I."

"Laurence, I am surprised that you should so offend against good taste—and me."

Mrs. Grantley spoke with perfect breeding,



calmly but displeasedly, with a stately Junonic kind of anger that was really very grand.

"Let it pass," said Laurence. "I forgot your susceptibilities on that point. However, here we are in evil case enough, and now what is to be done? A marriage, you say. Well! a marriage. Who shall it be?"

"I decline speaking with you, Laurence, while you adopt this mocking tone. If you mean a serious discussion, good; but I am in no humour for persiflage," said Mrs. Grantley, sternly.

"Fie! What does Shakespeare say of suspicion and a guilty mind? Or who is it—Pope, Thomson's Seasons, or Mrs. Hemans?"

"We will end the conversation, if you please," said Mrs. Grantley, rising in her turn. "You are impertinent, and you know I never submit to impertinence. When you choose to discuss the question with propriety, I shall be happy to resume the subject."

"Well, I will be serious," said Laurence, in a slightly less bantering tone. "Be just; or, if that is too high a flight for your ethical wings, be good-natured. This marriage is for your good as well as mine; yet I am to be the only victim. Grant me at least the luxury of kicking while you harness me. Now let us go fairly through the available list. Miss Sefton?" He laughed, but it was not quite a natural laugh, and, strangely enough, he, whose general look was fixed and steady, now kept his eyes bent down, intent on the condition of his nails. "She has money, I believe," he added, in a jeering kind of way. "Fifty pounds a year, if a penny."

"Jane Storey has more than that," said Mrs. Grantley, quietly.

"Jane Storey cannot speak English, and yesterday called me 'sir.' No, mother, not Jane Storey—no."

"I own she is not very accurate in the use of verbs and pronouns, and it would not be pleasant to have a person at the head of the Grantley table saying, 'Sir, will you take any of this beautiful leg of mutton?' Otherwise, she is not bad. She has decent teeth and tolerable hair, and quite a Cinderella foot. But I do not press her, Laurence. Gold leaf should be thick that covers dross, and Jane Storey's is not quite deep enough to hide the base metal underneath. There is Miss Ainsworth—what of her?"

"With red hair, and a hand like a butcher's fist."

"Golden hair. Twenty thousand pounds never has red hair. She will not do? Ah! you are fastidious. What then of Emma Laurie—sinking the parentage?"

"A tallow-chandler's daughter, and not much unlike her father's advertising mould. I always thought you somewhat choice and aristocratic in your ideas; but it seems as if the want of money had brought the want of other things too in its train. Yet, if you cannot be prudent, at least sin like a gentlewoman. Let us be true to our class, if not honest to our tradespeople."

"You are right: I *have* stooped too low. Birth is, of course, one of the necessities as well as money, and we must have both united," said Mrs. Grantley, with dangerous suavity. "Let me see—you do not like the Storey, nor the Ainsworth, nor yet the Laurie? What, then, do you say of Annie Sibson? Here you have everything, Laurence; family, fortune, education; nothing missing from the list." And Mrs. Grantley looked at her son with a hard, fixed gaze, which, as he well knew, meant everything possible to human will.

"Annie Sibson! A poker in petticoats, a fish, a mere nonentity, without grace, intelligence, or beauty; and forty years old at the least!"

"My dear boy, if you are looking for a gilded Venus, I am afraid you will go wifeless for ever. Annie Sibson was only twenty-nine last November—and is a very charming young woman——"

"She is a horror, mother; the worst of the lot. What on earth could have put her into your head?"

"Necessity, Laurence, and fate. Annie Sibson has fifty thousand pounds; she loves you, and you will marry her. You know this as well as I do."

"Loves me! *She* love! As cod-fish do. She is not unlike a cod-fish, herself—watery blue eyes, leaden skin, gaping mouth, and lint-white hair. She would make no end of a caricature."

"Laugh as you like, Laurence, Annie Sibson is your fate. Yet, perhaps, you had better take it as you do, with a jest and a smile: you might take it worse," observed Mrs. Grantley, sententiously.

"Or not at all," said Laurence, turning pale, as he always did when angry. "I am not forced to marry the girl, I suppose? Do you really believe that I have no free-will left, no self-assertion, at thirty-two years old? If you do, you will find yourself mistaken."

"You are absurd and childish; and show the weakness of your arguments by their violence. Do I force you to marry? Or indeed do I care about your marriage in any way, for myself?"

"Has your jointure nothing to do with it?" said Laurence. "Are there no awkward items there to wash out with a golden sponge? You are self-denying, mother, I know; always were; but not quite to the point of planning a rich marriage for your son that shall not be advantageous to yourself as well."

"Have it as you will. Only remember what Warner said in his letter to-day; the mortgage suddenly called in, and another mortgage for the same amount not to be had; that heavy bill of Lyon's to be met this day week; Marshall's acceptances falling due; the embarrassment, nay, Laurence, the ruin that is threatening you unless promptly bought off. What have I to do with all this, you say? Simply to remind you that Annie Sibson has fifty thousand pounds; that she loves you; and that the game is in your own hands. Annie Sibson will be at the ball to-night: and Warner's letter must be answered to-morrow."

"My mother makes me religious," said Laurence, as she left the room; "she makes me believe in devils."

He sat and brooded over all that she had said, forced to admit that the inexorable laws of expediency and worldly prudence were with her, and that his wisest course would be to marry Annie Sibson, and so stave off the Jews and the auctioneers. True, she was disagreeable, ugly, and ill-bred; while May Sefton—But then the money—that magic fifty thousand pounds—while poor pretty May had only her wavy chesnut-hair, and her large blue Irish eyes, her frank smile and tender heart, her simplicity, her grace, her loveliness and her beauty, and a paltry fifty pounds a year; scarcely enough to buy her gloves and bouquets! If May Sefton could but have had Annie's fortune, Laurence thought, the whole thing would have been perfect, and two people might be happy, instead of one a miserable sacrifice. Not that Laurence had any reason to believe that May loved him, more than she loved Fido, her Skye-terrier, or Muff, her Persian cat. But Laurence Grantley could not anticipate a refusal from any woman; nor, indeed, need he have feared one. Who could be found to refuse him, young, handsome, of an old family, reputed wealthy, acknowledged as the most agreeable man of the county, perfectly well-bred, and rather clever?

Half the county had gathered at the Assize ball to do full honour to the wretches who had been sentenced to be hanged, transported, or imprisoned. But of all the guests, none made a greater sensation than the Grantleys of the Hall. They ranked among the first families of the place; they were the largest landowners—what matter if every acre, even to the bare crags about that desolate Black Tarn up on the hill yonder, was mortgaged to its full value?—and were decidedly the leading people. Mother and son headed every list, whether of stewards or subscriptions; their doings supplied the local papers with one or two paragraphs weekly; they were foremost in everything, political, parochial, scientific, or social; nothing was considered complete that had not the countenance of the family at the Hall. Then, Mrs. Grantley was a local drawing-room queen, or milliner's Juno, whose beauty and breeding made society proud of her leadership. Neither had the late Mr. Grantley been false to the family traditions. A brave, kindly-hearted, open-handed, energetic man, full of energy and manliness flavoured with a certain full-bodied pomp, which does not sit ill on men of six feet, hard riders, fast livers, kind landlords, and generous neighbours—his death had left a gap which even Laurence himself had not filled up. But Laurence was doing his best to prove worthy of his name, and was now only slightly behind the place which his father's memory yet held in public opinion. Lavish, a little haughty and intensely proud, but kind-hearted and social, what faults he had did not show, and his virtues were rendered all the brighter by the silver-gilt of the

setting. And he was not such a bad fellow after all.

So, when the mother and son entered the room, the whole assembly rose to greet them as if they had been the chief magnates of the land, and Grantley Hall the Windsor Castle of England, instead of only Windsor Castle of the county.

Mrs. Grantley was used to this kind of homage; she accepted it as her due, gracefully if not gratefully, with dignified condescension, not with excitement or embarrassment. Do we not all know women who simply suffer love and permit admiration? To-night she was more than ordinarily gracious. She threw into her greetings such an impalpable kind of flattery, she was so full of sympathy and thought for every one, that she raised her popularity up to the highest pinnacle, and brought the whole shire, so to speak, on its knees at her feet. Laurence was quite as popular. Perhaps, less so with the men than with the women, who yet all combined to praise Mrs. Grantley loudly, and to profess the most unbounded admiration of her, from her millinery to her morals. Her son was only mentioned by them as an accident. But this is a way women have, with the stately mothers of well-looking sons, unmarried and desirable.

The first dance had been gone through when they entered, but some of the "best girls" were sitting in a small knot apart, as was the custom. To most of them the ball had not begun till Mr. Laurence Grantley appeared. May Sefton, the decided belle of the room, all in white and water-lilies, was surrounded by half a dozen aspirants, and smiled pleasantly and equally on all: even sometimes favouring with a kind of human recognition that intense vulgarian, the local lawyer, who, though of course not "in their set," was yet slightly known to the Seftons, as the local innkeeper might have been, or the postmaster, or the exciseman, or any other second-class individual permitted to exist. By her side was Annie Sibson, the great heiress, in cold blue, as cold as herself, under the chaperonage of May's mother; the Lord-Lieutenant's handsome daughter, in black and gold, was with them; and the bishop's tall niece, in strong-coloured pink helped out by hard trimmings, wine-bottle colour. Laurence lounged up to the group, bland and gracious, and was greeted with a volley of smiles and bright glances such as might have brought a dead man to life. May's sweet face dimpled from brow to chin as he bent down and spoke to her softly—more softly than to the others; and a pretty triumph broke like sunshine from her eyes. He was going to take her out the first, she thought; and that was always a coveted distinction. But after speaking with her for a few moments, Laurence suddenly turned to Annie Sibson, and asked her to waltz with him; asked her somewhat abruptly, and not as he had spoken to May; without looking at her, but keeping his eyes raised just above the level of her head; peculiarities of manner which Miss Annie did

not seem to notice, for her leaden cheek took a warmer tinge, and her dulled face brightened perceptibly as she walked up the room leaning on his arm; her mouth half open, and her long throat craned into an angle as usual. "It was Antinous and the eldest daughter of Hecate," said classical Mrs. Gray, the terror of all the young men in the neighbourhood.

Mrs. Grantley smiled graciously as they passed her, and turning to her neighbour said, with condescending benignity; "That dear girl, Annie Sibson, is really a great favourite of mine: she is not pretty, but so amiable, so good!—and singularly well-informed; with what our fathers would have said, a pretty turn for science."

"Not much manner," said the neighbour, who had daughters of her own—pretty girls without fortunes. Annie Sibson, with her fifty thousand pounds, was a thorn in her maternal side.

"Shy? Yes, undeniably so; but that is no fault, my dear Mrs. Craven, in these days of Spanish hats and Balmoral boots. I would we had a few more shy young ladies among us." Mrs. Grantley, like all women of the Junonic order, had a profound aversion to piquancy, whether in dress or in character; and Mrs. Craven's three daughters were three brunettes, with the shortest and reddest of petticoats, and the smallest and jauntiest of hats. The conversation dropped, and Mrs. Craven felt discomfited.

May Sefton looked on while the pair whirled rapidly past her; a shade paler and more thoughtful than she was a moment ago; puzzled too, and not able to read the riddle just offered to her. Then she stood up to waltz with that most insufferable of all coxcombs, Charley Fitzallen (who fancied himself in love with her), in obedience to a sarcastic request from Laurence "that she would not disappoint Mr. Fitzallen for his pleasure!" But either pride, or the buoyancy of youth, or perhaps a little justifiable dissimulation, soon brought back her smiles, and she danced with every one, and talked and laughed, and did her pretty little harmless tale of flirting quite merrily. And when Laurence, late in the evening, came to demand the honour of her hand for the next polka—still speaking softly, and looking into her eyes with tender admiration—he found her engaged so many deep there was no hope left for him.

He turned away with a bitter, loving, despairing speech. May looked after him with wondering pain, as again he whirled off with Annie Sibson, who, the young men used irreverently to say, danced like a graffe.

Laurence had danced so often with her to-night, that gossips laid their heads together, whispering their comments; one, bolder than the rest, even venturing to congratulate Mrs. Grantley on the coming accession of fortune to her son, congratulating the young lady also, on her success where all others had failed to fix. Whereat Mrs. Grantley looked grand and stony, answering, "I do not understand you," as gravely as if a royal sphinx had spoken.

Before Annie was shawled and in the carriage Laurence Grantley had proposed, and was accepted. The next day Warner was written to, and all these terrible embarrassments pressing so fiercely onward were disposed of with the offhand insolence of inexhaustible resources.

#### CHAPTER II.

THE Grantley marriage was a most brilliant affair. No marriages are so demonstrative as those which are made for interest, and where all the love is on one side; for the less people have, the more they seem bound to assume. Magnificent wedding presents; a battalion of upholsterers and decorators to fit the old Hall for the coming bride, a lavishness of expenditure, and gorgeousness of taste, that would have been princely if it had not been profligate; and then the world said how handsomely Laurence Grantley was acting, and to be sure he loved that uninteresting Annie Sibson after all, and had not married her for her money only. Annie half thought so, herself; disagreeable women generally believe themselves irresistible; yet there was a test which in spite of her confidence, she thought it only wise to apply: and that test was, the settlements. She had very cleverly managed to put off to the last, the signing of these important papers, and had refused all discussion on the point in a manner not to be gainsaid. She had left all this to her lawyer and her guardian, she said; they would do what was right. And what they did, was to take good care of her—very good care. When, therefore, the papers came down for signature the night before the wedding, they were not quite what Mrs. Grantley or Laurence had anticipated. Annie's lawyer and guardian—at least, she said it was done by them—had interpolated a few phrases here and there, which left her in a far better position than had been agreed on. In fact, they left her supreme, with the Grantley's "nowhere."

The Grantleys made some strong representations on the subject, but Annie opposed only a dull, dead, negative resistance, against which they simply fought without result, and wearied themselves in vain. As it was really of vital importance to get the interest of the money, if nothing else, they were obliged at last to give in, and leave her absolute possession of her fifty thousand pounds.

She had had two aims—the one to marry Laurence Grantley, the other to keep her fortune to herself; and she carried both. She did not know how Laurence cursed her in his heart as she sat with her filmy eyes fixed immovably on the wall, her whole aspect one of imbecile obstinacy; and she would not have much cared if she had known. Annie Sibson never turned aside from her own path because other people cried out that she walked over their grounds, and took more than was her right. "Let them keep their gates shut and their fences, as I do mine," said Annie, hedging in her bit of ground doggedly.



As, when it came to the question of the signing, Laurence Grantley had gone too far to retreat with honour, he was forced to know himself overreached. So the farce went on with its intended splendour, though the principal actor had lost half his fees, and the tinsel garlands all their bloom. May Sefton was a bridesmaid—all the beauties of the county were bridesmaids—and her beauty never looked so bewitching as when she stood behind Laurence Grantley's "fish." Laurence felt his haughty heart rise bitterly as he led her from the altar; bound, fettered, married for life; married to *her*, with May Sefton following on their steps, talking gaily and, as it seemed, unconcerned with the groomsmen. Bitter, bitter were the man's thoughts in that short passage from the altar to the vestry; dully triumphant the ungainly bride's; undefined and somewhat tumultuous May Sefton's, who could not help thinking that Laurence Grantley had once liked her better than all the rest, and even now spoke to her differently than he spoke to the rest. May knew how to keep her own secrets.

In the vestry Laurence nearly lost his self-control, when Annie, in a strange tone of familiarity and command, desired him to pick up her handkerchief, which she had let fall. It was the Wife's voice, the possessor's, the command of rightful ownership and public pledge. But he did her bidding, gracefully and gallantly; for he was too proud to give the world occasion for talk, and, come what might, he was resolved that no one should learn his secret. Annie smiled, and looked round with dull complacency, as if a showman had shown off his spaniel's latest trick.

The breakfast passed decorously enough, and they went off on the wedding-tour with all pomp and circumstance. Mrs. Grantley said to herself that Laurence would now be able to mould her to his own will—brides are so malleable!—and that if things were not in true shape when they returned, then she, Mrs. Grantley, queen and autocrat of the county, would undertake the task.

#### CHAPTER III.

"MRS. LAURENCE GRANTLEY at home."

The neighbourhood received cards bearing this notification, and the neighbourhood went up in family parties to the Hall.

"Every one may come once," was Annie's silent decision; "that is, for the Grantleys; but I will arrange who comes twice."

The war had begun. It had virtually begun in the vestry when Annie paraded her new-made husband's obedience, and settled herself in her place as the dominator of the whole. It had been going on ever since; and a war with Annie was no trifle. Worse to bear than the most passionate outbursts of violence and wrath, was her inert resistance: that smooth, unangular, undefined resistance which offers no point of hold to an antagonist, and simply fails to succumb. Had she ever re-

fused a request in anger, ever argued a point openly, ever spoken vehemently or with the exaggeration of passion? Never; but she sat with the half imbecile expression upon her which she assumed when obstinate. She would have held her point to the Day of Judgment. She had an irresistible argument in her power of appointing her hair; for she had reserved this right absolutely and unconditionally, and held it like a coiled lasso over the head of her husband. So that if Laurence Grantley wished his marriage to be of any real ulterior advantage to him, he must keep her in good humour; which meant, that he must let her have her own way unchecked.

Even Mrs. Grantley's position was precarious. "I think it would be better if your mother had a separate establishment before we return," said Annie one day, at Rome; and Laurence, who knew his bride a little better now than at first, knew that his mother's tenure of royalty was at an end.

He made no reply, but wrote home at once, repeating what his wife had said, but somewhat more roundly and offensively; for, as Laurence had no love, though a vast deal of admiration, for his mother, and as she had no reversions which might keep him in check, he never cared to diplomatise with her, or to soften what might be offensive.

Mrs. Grantley received his letter scornfully. "It will be strange if I cannot *maîtriser* such a nonentity as Annie Sibson," she wrote: and stayed on.

Annie never resumed the subject while abroad; but, while they were crossing the Channel to England, she said, letting her words fall like water drops, without clearness of enunciation, emphasis, or expression: "Has Mrs. Grantley left the Hall yet?"

"No," said Laurence, shortly.

"I think she had better," said Annie.

"She has no wish to do so," said Laurence.

"Neither do I desire it."

"I think she had better," repeated Annie.

"Tell her so yourself, Mrs. Grantley. Take my mother in hand and manage her to your own liking; perhaps you will not find the task so easy as you imagine."

"I think she had better go," was all Annie's answer; and the subject dropped.

When they got home, they found Mrs. Grantley still lady paramount; receiving Annie graciously, and patronising her on her return with marvellous effects of black velvet and costly lace. Annie hung her lip and looked stupid, received all these demonstrations very coldly, and did not in any manner respond to them; but before an hour was out, and before Mrs. Grantley knew what had happened, she found herself set aside, her orders opposed, her assertions contradicted flatly—without passion or excitement, but unequivocally—the servants made to understand who was now the real mistress; and the whole reins of management taken, without force, but irresistibly, from her hands. Mrs. Grantley's tactics were of no avail against a system

that had nothing tangible, and against a person whom it was impossible to excite or bring to bay.

"I think you would be better in a house of your own," she used to say about once a day, as her sole answer to Mrs. Grantley's stately representations that on such and such an occasion—contradicting her flatly at table, refusing her the carriage, rescinding her orders, or the like—she had acted unbecomingly, and without due regard to her (Mrs. Grantley's) position. And at last, by force of her unceasing insults, always very quietly given, she shouldered out the elder lady and forced her to go. There was no quarrel, no tumult, no scandal. Mrs. Grantley's pride could no longer submit; and she went.

"I think she is best gone," said Annie, imperturbably, when the last shred belonging to the former mistress had disappeared from the Hall. Then she went to pore over the aquarium, and tease her chameleon; for she had a kind of sympathy with all bloodless creatures, and was great in a shallow kind of scientific play: trying her hand at photography, modelling, and various unexciting amusements; but especially given up to her water world.

What she did with Mrs. Grantley she did also with the visitors to the Hall. Those whom she did not like, took care not to call again. She did nothing overt; said nothing that could be repeated as personally insolent; but was altogether so disagreeable, that those whom she did not affect left the house irreconcilably offended, and never entered it a second time. The only one who stood out against her was Mr. Clarke Jones, the country lawyer, who lived on the edge of the great world of the county, and appeared at the Assize ball as May Sefton's distant admirer. Laurence used to give this person an occasional dirty job to do, and Jones prized his slender footing in the Hall too much to relinquish it, cost what it would in self-respect to retain. His skin was as thick as a rhinoceros's hide; to all Mrs. Laurence's undefined insults he opposed a callous impudence that would not be abashed, a vulgar self-complacency that would not be ruffled. "He gave her back as good as she brought," he used to say; and not without truth. It was the file and the granite; and the granite had the best of it.

Thus, whether she liked it or not, she had to endure his visits, and somehow Mr. Clarke Jones managed to make them tolerably frequent: perpetually coming up to the Hall with small bits of local information, which "he thought it right Mr. Grantley should know." Laurence suffered him to prowl about in this manner, partly because he was sometimes useful, and partly because he understood the secret antagonism going on, and was not sorry to see his wife foiled at her own game.

If the bull-necked, insolent country lawyer were Annie's sore point, the settlements, and a loan which Laurence wanted to raise on her security, were his. Annie would not do him this service. "I married to be mistress of the Hall, not to be a beggar," she used to say; "so you need not ask, for I never will."

As yet, Laurence had not got much good out of his marriage. True, there was the will, drawn up in his favour and leaving him absolute possession after death, which, with much trouble and bitterness on both sides, Laurence had induced her to sign. But he had no great satisfaction in this, for whenever he vexed Annie—and she was always being vexed—she threatened to revoke it, and "leave him the ruined spendthrift she found him." In short, she led him a sad life about this same will; and, indeed, about everything else; and made the sin of his mercenary marriage bring its own punishment with it, and that speedily. And all this time she kept, carefully locked up in a secret drawer, another and a later will, duly signed and attested, which left all she had, to a certain Mrs. Jane Gilbert, of Eagley, in another county, "in reparation of the wrong done her." So Annie had immense satisfaction in her dealings with her husband, whom she annoyed by an appearance, and deceived by a reality.

She had had this second and secret will drawn up immediately on her signing the first; and when she had become perfectly aware *why* she had been married. For Laurence, though generally careless and good-natured enough with her: respecting her for her "good family"—which sense of good family was his great weakness—if not loving her for her person, had once unfortunately lost his temper and common sense, and had told her, in clear, sharp, incisive terms, that he had never loved her; that he had married her solely for her money; that he cursed the day he ever met her, and wished he or she had died at the church door. Annie treasured up all these wild words, carefully, and registered a vow that never, from that day, should a farthing of her money flow into the Grantley coffers, and that, come what might, she would be revenged. So wretched Laurence was no better off than if he had married dear May—loving, beautiful May—and her paltry thousand pounds.

"Would that I had!" he groaned in despair. "Would that I had dared to be brave and true—to face my position and claim May's happy love!"

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